Entrepreneurial Action: Community and Buddhism Contexts in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship research has long focused on singular views – the psychological traits, behaviour and opportunity approaches. These single-focus approaches limit the potential to understand entrepreneurship more fully and there are calls to move towards a more integrated view of entrepreneurship that includes context. This thesis supports a broader integration arguing that entrepreneurial action occurs through the interaction between community and religious contexts. This central argument embraces three notions. *First*, entrepreneurship involves a series of entrepreneurial actions. *Second*, entrepreneurial action interacts with the context, and *third*, entrepreneurial action requires agency.

The overarching research question for this study is: "*How do community and Buddhism interact with entrepreneurial action*?" Using the philosophical position of critical realism and the case study approach as the research strategy to theorise entrepreneurial action, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 Buddhist entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka.

Findings revealed that the actions of an emergent venture flow through two discrete phases: pre-launch and post-launch. The entrepreneurial action themes that emerged in the pre-launch phase were entrepreneurial intention and resourcing, whereas, in this study, the post-launch phase extended beyond the venture to include community vitality. The two types of communities – family and social – interacted with entrepreneurs enabling and constraining their pre-launch actions. The interaction of the enabling and constraining roles of communities created tension for entrepreneurs when realising their venturing aspirations. Entrepreneurs' religious background – that of Buddhism – guided them to eliminate the tensions imposed by communities. Discernment, right livelihood, and determination are considered the essential Buddhist tenets in this relationship. During the post-launch phase, communities were impacted by entrepreneurial actions. Making positive contributions to improve communities was an objective during the post-launch phase. This objective translated into different altruistic acts that improved community vitality. Serving communities offered excellent potential to improve the economic, social and natural environmental vitalities of those communities. These post-launch entrepreneurial actions were informed by the compassionate dimension of Buddhism.

These findings contribute to the entrepreneurial action literature by integrating the concepts involved within the intricacies of community and Buddhism contexts together to more fully inform entrepreneurial action. This study extends the understanding of entrepreneurial action by presenting it as process that incorporates a) pre- and post-launch actions, b) entrepreneurial action and context, c) the definition of community, d) the Buddhist tenets relevant to entrepreneurial actions, and e) entrepreneurial agency. Policymakers, educators, entrepreneurs, and community members can benefit from the findings of this study as it highlights the mechanisms of entrepreneurial action in a Buddhist context.

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Chapter One

Introduction

> *Even my family opposed my decision to start my own venture and there were good reasons for that. One was that my mother worked in a bank and her friends' children were working in international or national companies and now that I also had studied, well she expected me to join a reputable company like them.* (The T-shirt manufacturer - Participant A)

> *If you don't see something, if you don't find out anything, if you don't have anything, don't believe what I (The Buddha) say, don't believe in what the Buddhist teachings tell you, don't believe what the prophets say, but do what you think is right.* (The chairman of a business conglomerate - Participant T)

1.1 The Overarching Research Problem

While Mark Zuckerberg's father hired IT tutors to give extra help to the youngster so that he realise his entrepreneurial aspirations, many others have had their entrepreneurial aspirations hindered because their parents, spouses or peers have pressurised them not to become an entrepreneur, perceiving it not to be reputable as, for example, a government job. In the context of Sri Lanka, these community members tend to perceive entrepreneurship as an insecure occupation due to the political instability in the country. Evidently, Sri Lankans typically do not see the surrounding community and religious factors as conducive to entrepreneurial action (SLASSCOM, 2016).

Indeed, Sri Lanka had the second-lowest economic growth rate (3.5%) between 2000-2009, after the Maldives and Pakistan (2%) (Sarvananthan, 2011). Yet, Sri Lanka's strategic geographic position at the southern tip of India places it at the nexus of the world, connecting the Far East and the Pacific with Europe and the Americas. The Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) claims that the country is ready to become one of the fastest-growing economies in South Asia, with a current Gross Domestic Product of USD 81.1 billion in 2020 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020). This highlights that particular contexts can assist or hinder the entrepreneurial actions.

Further, 70.1% of the population in Sri Lanka are Buddhists, and approximately 75% of the population are of Sinhalese ethnicity (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020). Buddhism is an important part of cultural life in Sri Lanka and is the home of the world's oldest continuing Buddhist civilisation (Holt, 2003). Entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka is therefore culturally bound, and the actions of entrepreneurs need to be viewed within the context of Buddhism. Because entrepreneurship is a social phenomenon (Shepherd, Wennberg, Suddaby, & Wiklund, 2019), it is unrealistic to think that entrepreneurial action emerges in isolation (Dimov, 2007) and is not impact by the context in which it occurs (McMullen, Ingram, & Adams, 2020). These contextual factors – that of community and Buddhism - may well have important implications on entrepreneurial action in Sri Lanka.

As personal interest and geographic relevance regarding the nexus between entrepreneurial action, community and Buddhism are not sufficient reasons to make a topic worthy of a doctoral thesis, the literature on entrepreneurship was explored. It was found that research regarding entrepreneurship has long focused on *singular views* – such as psychological traits, behaviour, and opportunity approaches. As this focus limits the ability to understand entrepreneurship fully, there are calls to move towards a more integrated view of

entrepreneurship – one that includes the context (Audretsch, Lehmann, & Schenkenhofer, 2020).

A dominant call is to depart from Venkataraman's (1997) historic opportunity framework (Kitching & Rouse, 2017). Recent critiques suggest that the opportunity framework does not set enough boundaries for entrepreneurship (Davidsson, Recker, & von Briel, 2020) because it lacks conceptual clarity, and it does not help to explain sufficiently the causes, processes, and consequences of entrepreneurial action (Davidsson, 2015). The conceptual significance of the current research is its contribution to moving away from the singular view to a more contextualised view of entrepreneurship (Audretsch et al., 2020). Indeed, Kitching and Rouse (2017; 2020) support a broader integration, concurring that entrepreneurial action occurs through interactions between community and religious contexts. This argument embraces the following notions. *First*, entrepreneurship involves a series of entrepreneurial actions (Shepherd, 2015), *second*, entrepreneurial actions interact within the context (Kitching & Rouse, 2017) and *third*, entrepreneurial action requires agency (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). The following paragraphs illuminate these three notions to arrive at the overarching research question of the study.

Entrepreneurship involves a series of entrepreneurial actions and embraces the idea of *"creation of new ventures"* (Davidsson et al., 2020) [or of organisational emergence as Lichtenstein, Carter, Dooley, and Gartner (2007) or new economic activity as Wiklund, Davidsson, Audretsch, and Karlsson (2011) put it]. According to Shepherd, Souitaris, and Gruber (2020), the phenomenon of the creation of new ventures stands as the central argument of entrepreneurship. Creation of new ventures implies that the concept is examined in terms of the mechanisms or actions of new venture creation, rather than focusing on particular organisational activities (Lichtenstein et al., 2007). In doing so, the perspective that

understands the transformative *process* by which goals become outcomes is also introduced into entrepreneurial action research (McMullen & Dimov, 2013).

There are no context-free actions (Archer, 1995); therefore, the context may be an essential element to understand entrepreneurial actions (Audretsch et al., 2020; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). As definitions of contextualisation vary, causing inconsistencies among researchers (Zahra, Wright, & Abdelgawad, 2014), this research contributes to a broader perspective of context that includes a natural setting to understand its forms, functioning and origin (Zahra & Wright, 2011). It may offer new insights to disentangle the puzzle of what context is. Agents are variably positioned in the context producing entrepreneurial action and the context can be separated into structure and culture (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020). Structures such as communities are constituted by enduring relationships between internally related positions.

Individual-level entrepreneurship embodies a spatial dimension that may have relevance to communities. Individuals are manifested in communities. Those communities may have numerous effects on their entrepreneurial actions and *vice versa*. For instance, entrepreneurial action is shaped from and by the interactions between entrepreneurs and communities (McKeever, Jack, & Anderson, 2015; Meoli, Fini, Sobrero, & Wiklund, 2020). Regarding the spatial dimension of entrepreneurship in communities, entrepreneurial action can also be seen as a cultural phenomenon drawing on contextually expressed discourses, including religious ones (Dodd & Gotsis, 2007). Religions promote values within society (Block, Fisch, & Rehan, 2019), sometimes encouraging entrepreneurial action (Balog, Baker, & Walker, 2014) and sometimes discouraging entrepreneurial action (Wiseman & Young, 2014).

The focal contextual religion in this study is Buddhism, the dominant religion in Sri Lanka. Buddhism, as a religion, has attracted scant attention in entrepreneurship research to date (Block et al., 2019). It is a non-theistic religion and philosophy which originated from the teaching of Buddha (Rāhula, 2006). In the case of Buddhist entrepreneurs, Buddhism may provide a template to shape their actions. For example, what entrepreneurial intentions to pursue, and how to ensure right livelihood in business (Valliere, 2008). To better understand entrepreneurial action, therefore, may require an understanding of how entrepreneurial action is shaped in the social context, especially from a religious viewpoint.

Taken collectively, this research examines the interaction between entrepreneurial action, community, and Buddhism. Entrepreneurs are manifested in communities involved in the production of their action. Their action may interact within the context that includes community and religious dimensions. The geographic context of this study is Sri Lanka, which is not well known for its entrepreneurial activities. Most Sri Lankans do not see religious and community factors as conducive to entrepreneurial action. Therefore, this research project examines the enactment of entrepreneurial action as an activity that employs the interaction between the community and religious contexts. The overarching research problem is stated as: ***"How do community and Buddhism interact with entrepreneurial action?"***

1.2 Major Research Contributions

As mentioned earlier, the current debate regarding entrepreneurship has long focused on singular views – i.e., psychological traits, behaviour, and opportunity approaches. However, there have been calls to depart from the singular view to a more integrated view since it is argued that the singular view limits the potential to understand entrepreneurship fully (Audretsch et al., 2020). A theoretical contribution of this research supports this argument embracing Shepherd's (2015) idea of entrepreneurial action: entrepreneurship

involves a series of actions. Findings of this study are that entrepreneurial action involves pre- and post-launch phases of a venture – that of entrepreneurial intention, resourcing, and community vitality.

In addition, the main research findings contributed to knowledge by explaining entrepreneurial action as a phenomenon that interacts with community and Buddhism contexts. These findings are consistent with Kitching and Rouse's (2017; 2020) explanation of entrepreneurial action. They argued that explanations of entrepreneurial action require a reference to both agent (e.g., entrepreneur) and context. They defined entrepreneurial action as "how goods and services come into being through interactions between entrepreneurs and their *structural*[1] and *cultural* contexts" [emphasis added] (Kitching & Rouse, 2017, p. 571).

The interplay between the context (community and religion) and each phase of entrepreneurial action also added rich understandings to the existing body of knowledge. *First*, regarding the community context, findings of this research contributed to extend the definition of a community – that of defining it as enduring relationships among actors, often with geographic bounds (Freeman & Audia, 2006). According to the findings, the community can be separated into two segments: close (i.e., family[2]) and distant (i.e., social[3]) communities. These two community types interact with the pre-launch phases enabling and constraining their actions. Findings regarding the enabling and constraining roles of communities on pre-launch phases also provided novel theoretical implications. For example, the instrumental support (i.e., tangible support) offered by family members aided individuals to shift from

[1] Structure equates to the community where an entrepreneurial venture is manifested Santana, A., Wood, M. S., & Nelson, R. E. (2016). Sociocultural context, entrepreneur types, mindsets and entrepreneurial action in tiradentes, brazil. In J. Katz & A. C. Corbett (Eds.), *Models of start-up thinking and action: Theoretical, empirical and pedagogical approaches* (pp. 33-74). Bingley, England: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
[2] Family (i.e., close community conduit) refers to the group that the entrepreneur is surrounded with consisting of parents, spouse, and children.
[3] Social (i.e., distant community conduit) is any member who is outside the family unit such as, relatives, friends, colleagues, peers, etc.

employment to pursue entrepreneurial careers. In addition, another theoretical contribution of this research includes the variation in the relationships between community members during different phases of ventures. A detailed discussion regarding the theoretical implications of the research findings of community interaction on entrepreneurial action is provided in Chapter Nine.

Second, regarding the religion context of entrepreneurial action, the existing body of knowledge provides inconclusive results on how religion manifests in entrepreneurial action – sometimes discouraging it and sometimes encouraging it (Farmaki, Altinay, Christou, & Kenebayeva, 2020). Findings of this research supported the latter view in that religion guides entrepreneurs to realise their goals. These findings may contribute to this neglected aspect of entrepreneurship and religion research (Pavlovich & Markman, in press). A detailed discussion regarding the theoretical implications of the research findings of the roles of Buddhism and Buddhist tenets in entrepreneurial action is provided in Chapter Nine.

In addition to the theoretical contributions, this study has valuable practical implications for policymakers, educators, students, and community members regarding the mechanisms of entrepreneurial action. For instance, findings of this research captured the importance of government intervention to convert entrepreneurial intention to start-ups. Entrepreneurs experience varied tensions from community members owing to the liabilities of newness of the firm that result in limiting their venturing intentions. In this regard, governmental intervention is understood as essential, especially at the initial stages of the venture.

1.3 Methodology

This research is situated in a critical realist inspired framework. The research strategy adopted in this study includes multiple case studies using a holistic design. The unit of analysis is a Buddhist entrepreneur who owns an entrepreneurial venture. The term entrepreneur in this research is defined as a business founder who is able to mediate his or her values, especially Buddhist religious values, in business. Using theoretical sampling, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 entrepreneurs. Allowing the heterogeneity criterion in the sample to achieve a variation among the cases, this research selected both novice[4], habitual[5] and portfolio[6] entrepreneurs.

Data analysis followed Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton's (2013) suggestions to carry out inductive thematic analysis using an open-coding approach. This approach involved identifying, categorising, and labelling direct statements by the study participants (i.e., first-order codes) into more theoretical constructs (i.e., second-order themes). The second-order themes were then condensed into more general theoretical constructs – that of overarching theoretical dimensions.

Data was loaded into qualitative analysis software, NVIVO-12 for examination. The analysis adheres to Riege's (2003) suggestion of ensuring quality in critical realist research, by using measurements to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Methodological considerations of this research complied with the ethical guidelines provided by the University of Waikato, New Zealand: Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations (UoW, 2020).

[4] Novice entrepreneurs are individuals with no prior experience as a business founder.
[5] Habitual entrepreneurs are individuals with prior experience as a business founder.
[6] Portfolio entrepreneurs are individual who have experienced two or more entrepreneurial opportunities.

1.4 Outline of Thesis

The rest of the thesis is organised as follows:

- Chapter Two reviews the four main strands of literature that relate to the overarching research question: entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial action, community, and Buddhism.
- Chapter Three describes the research methodology and methods used to gather the data. The chapter begins with the philosophical position of the study – critical realism – to justify the methodology to investigate the overarching research question. The chapter also set outs the research design including the research strategy, data collection, and analysis methods. Finally, the chapter clarifies the measures taken to ensure the quality of the data.
- Chapter Four explains the context of the study – Sri Lanka. This chapter provides a brief overview of the country. It also describes the nature of entrepreneurship and Buddhism in Sri Lanka to provide a context for the research.
- Chapter Five is the first of the three data chapters. This chapter explains findings on the theme of "Entrepreneurial Intention" which was revealed as the first phase of entrepreneurial action. This intention phase of the venture equates to the gestation stage, where entrepreneurial ideas and intentions are generated. This chapter presents the interaction between entrepreneurial intention, community, and Buddhism.
- Chapter Six details the findings on the second theme of entrepreneurial action. "Resourcing" is the immediate step that a prospective entrepreneur might take to proceed his/her entrepreneurial intention as the entrepreneur equips the venture with resources. According to the data, there are two stages of resourcing: bricolage and assembly. This chapter presents the interaction between resourcing, community, and

Buddhism. Findings presented in Chapters Five and Six relate to the pre-launch phases of entrepreneurial action.

- Chapter Seven describes findings regarding the post-launch phase of entrepreneurial action. "Community vitality" refers to the entrepreneurial action where the entrepreneur carried out altruistic acts to improve community vitality. Analysis of the data suggested that serving communities offers excellent potential for improving their economic, social, and natural environmental vitalities. This chapter also explains how Buddhism informs this post-launch entrepreneurial action.
- Chapter Eight details the theoretical development of the study and presents a conceptual model that offers a coherent model of entrepreneurial action. This conceptual model brings structural (i.e., community) and religious (i.e., Buddhism) contexts together to inform entrepreneurial action. This conceptual model is a theoretical development of the findings described in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven.
- Chapter Nine presents the conclusions of the thesis. It highlights its theoretical contribution to the literature by discussing the research's implications for theory and practice.

1.5 Summary

Chapter One set the scene for the thesis. The overarching research question of the study was introduced, and the major research contributions and methodological considerations were briefly discussed. Finally, the structure of the thesis was explained.

Chapter Two will review the major strands of literature to clarify where the current research fits in the context of entrepreneurship literature and in relation to the overarching research question of the study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One introduced the foundation for developing the overarching research question of the study - *How do community and Buddhism interact with entrepreneurial action?* This chapter clarifies how this question arises from the existing entrepreneurship literature. The chapter has four main sections. Following the introduction, Section Two sets the scene by reviewing literature regarding the historical development of entrepreneurship. The three distinct approaches of entrepreneurship – that of trait, behavioural, and opportunity identification are reviewed and critiqued. Section Three focuses more specifically on entrepreneurial action as a response to the critiques of the three distinct approaches of entrepreneurship. The two major contexts of the study – that of community and Buddhism are reviewed in this section. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary and sets the scene for the methodology and method chapter.

2.2 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a fast-growing and dynamic field of study with long intellectual and practical traditions. The field has significantly grown since the 1980s (Landström, Harirchi, & Åström, 2012). Its dynamic nature eludes attempts to capture all its relevant areas resulting in the absence of a universal definition (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Evidently, the problem of absence of a universal definition still exists. As Audretsch et al. (2020) explain, entrepreneurship is poorly understood due to its emphasis on a narrow and one-dimensional view of entrepreneurship research.

However, the intellectual origins of entrepreneurship can be traced back to the seminal works of economists such as Schumpeter (1934), Cantillon (1755), Knight (1921), and Smith (1776) who laid the foundation by defining entrepreneurship and its relationship to economic growth, innovation, and uncertainty. The first scholar to explain entrepreneurship with a precise economic meaning was Cantillon (1755). In his seminal work, he described the principles of the early market economy based on economic interdependency and individual property rights. Later, Adam Smith's (1776) classical economic theory was introduced. Smith discussed the role of the entrepreneur in the market economy (Landström et al., 2012).

Although Cantillon's (1755) and Smith's (1776) works laid the foundation for the concept of entrepreneurship, their views were largely based on economic perspectives. The first work that emphasised entrepreneurship *per se* was Schumpeter's (1934) ideas on change and newness. The central idea that he proposed was that economic growth does not result from capital accumulation, but, rather, from new combinations or innovations that create disequilibrium within the market (Landström et al., 2012). Kirzner (1973) extended these notions by arguing that disequilibrium creates market imperfections. An entrepreneur can be regarded as a person who is alert to market imperfections. Alert entrepreneurs see these market imperfections as opportunities, and they convey information about available opportunities (Alvarez, Barney, & Anderson, 2013).

However, after some decades the field of research that was based on market imperfections, economic interdependency etc lost momentum. Scholars from psychology and sociology entered the academic debate discussing personality and key traits in defining an entrepreneur (Landström et al., 2012). One of the most influential studies was David McClelland's (1961) study that argued the importance of need for achievement and its importance for economic development. Along with McClelland's work, a few other studies

(see; Brockhaus, 1980; Greenberger & Sexton, 1988; Schere, 1982) discussed personal qualities (i.e., traits) of entrepreneurs and occupied a central position in entrepreneurship research during 1960s and 1980s. Next, this review focuses on the trait approach and particularly why this approach has failed to offer a true picture of entrepreneurship.

2.2.1 The Trait Approach

The trait approach is considered the "take-off phase" for entrepreneurship literature (Landström et al., 2012, p. 1156). The trait approach generally places an emphasis on the entrepreneur. It is also known as the person-centric approach, as it attributes characteristics and psychological traits to people in defining entrepreneurship (Mazzarol & Reboud, 2020b). The fundamental argument of the trait approach is that some individuals are more likely to recognise opportunities and thus behave entrepreneurially, because personal traits lead one to make different decisions regarding opportunities than others under similar conditions (Shane, 2003). Much research regarding the trait approach asks: Why do some individuals start ventures when others under the same conditions do not? Are individuals born with entrepreneurial traits that predispose them to entrepreneurial pursuits? Is there a set of traits that can be attributed to an entrepreneurial personality? These types of questions force scholars to examine, "Who is an entrepreneur?" (Gartner, 2017).

The trait approach recognises an entrepreneur as a particular personality type that has certain motives (Kobia, Nafukho, & Sikalieh, 2010). In predicting entrepreneurship, motivation is considered as a popular individual factor (Wang, Lin, Yeh, Li, & Li, 2016). Motivation is a psychological construction, and it "is a major explanatory factor in an individual's ability to mobilise in the pursuit of goals" (Estay, Durrieu, & Akhter, 2013, p. 244). Regarding venture creation, personality and motivation are considered to be related

facets (Kobia et al., 2010). Therefore, a growing number of studies explore the influence of personality and motivation on entrepreneurship (Vasalampi et al., 2014).

The focus of entrepreneurial motivation research is to investigate the typology that includes intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Intrinsic motivation is defined as one's motivation to engage in an activity primarily for its own sake (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Al-Jubari, Hassan, and Linan (2019) write that intrinsic motivation includes personal interests that drive an individual to achieve a particular outcome such as self-determination, reciprocity, and need for achievement. Extrinsic motivation is defined as one's motivation to engage in an activity in response to something apart from the work itself (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Al-Jubari et al. (2019) add that extrinsic motivations include an expectation of separable outcomes such as pride, receiving money, or even avoiding unemployment.

Regardless of the motivation typology that includes intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, the literature indicates that entrepreneurial traits, in general, include risk-taking propensity (Brockhaus, 1980), tolerance of ambiguity (Schere, 1982), innovativeness (Schumpeter, 1934), locus of control (Greenberger & Sexton, 1988) and need for achievement (Rauch & Frese, 2007). In addition to these traits, a high number of entrepreneurial traits were studied as well (Newman, Obschonka, Schwarz, Cohen, & Nielsen, 2019).

Despite the growing emphasis in the literature, researchers gradually lost interest in researching entrepreneurial traits due to the limitations of the approach (Mazzarol & Reboud, 2020a). One major critique was that the trait approach only partially answers the question: What makes people initiate new ventures? (Landström et al., 2012). According to Rauch and Frese (2014), the great variety of psychological traits results in a lack of consensus regarding the primary "entrepreneurial" disposition. Similarly, a number of reviews published during the nineties argued that the trait approach to defining entrepreneurship produced conflicting and

inconsistent empirical results and, as a consequence, the personality approach was criticised. The main criticisms were: *first*, most studies on entrepreneurial traits lacked a theoretical framework and were purely descriptive (Low & Macmillan, 1988). *Second*, nearly all studies ignored situational contingencies and lacked methodological rigour (Smith, Gannon, & Sapienza, 1989).

With these limitations, the research focus shifted to entrepreneurial behaviour, with an emphasis on defining entrepreneurship in terms of what the entrepreneur really does (Gartner, 2017). Researchers did not ignore entrepreneurial traits. Rather, critics of the trait approach showed the need for another view of entrepreneurship as personality traits and behaviour are interconnected. The behavioural view demonstrated alternative approaches to how entrepreneurial traits can be researched. For example, McCrae and Costa (1990) understand personality as propensities to act. Different propensities may enable or hinder entrepreneurs' behaviours. Therefore, it is assumed that personality traits are predictors of behaviour (Rauch & Frese, 2000).

2.2.2 The Behavioural Approach

As mentioned earlier, the behavioural approach seeks to define entrepreneurship by focusing on what an entrepreneur does (Gartner, 2017). "An entrepreneur is an individual who establishes and manages a business from the principal purpose of profit and growth" (Carland, Hoy, Boulton, & Carland, 1984, p. 358). The behavioural approach, therefore, looks at entrepreneurship from the view of creating and managing an organisation. The creation and management perspective of entrepreneurial behaviour can be realised as a process encompassing different elements. However, providing a general picture of the entrepreneurial process is a challenging task (Bjerke & Hultman, 2002). The entrepreneur is considered as a part of the process by which enterprises come into existence, i.e., entrepreneurs create ventures

(Kobia et al., 2010). To those for whom these two terms are different, the venture is an outcome of entrepreneurship, but for whom they are similar, venture creation is in itself an act of entrepreneurship (Kobia et al., 2010).

As with the trait approach, the behavioural approach was also criticised due to its limitations. For instance, Venkataraman (1997) argued that the behavioural approach only provides a partial contribution to understanding entrepreneurship. Because trait and behavioural approaches failed to describe entrepreneurship fully, scholars followed another research path – that of the opportunity approach.

2.2.3 The Opportunity Approach

Another distinctive approach that attempted to examine entrepreneurship was the opportunity approach. In this approach entrepreneurial opportunity was considered as the central theme. For instance, Shane (2003) posits entrepreneurship, "as an activity that involves *discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities* to introduce new goods and services, ways of organising, markets, processes, and raw materials through organising efforts that previously had not existed" [emphasis added] (p.4). As Venkataraman (1997) writes, entrepreneurship as a field "*seeks to understand how opportunities to bring into existence 'future' goods and services are discovered, created, and exploited, by whom, and with what consequences"* (p. 120; italics in original).

The examination of entrepreneurial opportunity involves: how and when opportunities exist, the sources of opportunities, the process of opportunity discovery, strategies employed to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as how some individuals and not others discover and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Taken collectively, entrepreneurship involves a nexus of enterprising individuals and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Research on entrepreneurial opportunities has its origins in the discovery and creation of entrepreneurial opportunities (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). These two perspectives define entrepreneurial opportunities differently on the basis of their beliefs. In particular, the opportunity discovery perspective believes that opportunities are formed by the exogenous shocks in pre-existing markets or industries, whilst the opportunity creation perspective believes that opportunities are created by the entrepreneurs themselves (Shane, 2003) (see Table 1 below). These two perspectives are discussed next.

2.2.3.1 Opportunity Discovery

The opportunity discovery perspective is rooted in the Kirznerian (Kirzner, 1973; 1997) idea that opportunities are independent of entrepreneurs; opportunities are out there in the market waiting to be captured (Shane, 2012). According to this perspective, opportunities are generated by exogenous shocks in pre-existing markets or industries (Alvarez et al., 2013). The sources of these shocks include changes in technology, consumer preferences, or any other attribute within an industry or market. Alert entrepreneurs discover these market shocks as opportunities, and they convey information about available opportunities (Alvarez et al., 2013).

According to Venkataraman (1997), exogenous shocks in existing industries or markets can form opportunities in at least two ways. *First*, as Kirzner (1973) writes, changes in the market or industry equilibrium can lead some individuals to be aware of information about opportunities of which others may not be aware. *Second*, as Schumpeter (1934) asserts, changes in market or industry equilibrium can generate new information that was not available before the exogenous shocks.

The literature suggests that entrepreneurial traits such as planning, information seeking, and entrepreneurial alertness may facilitate opportunity discovery (Tang, Kacmar, & Busenitz,

2012). According to Austrian economics, prior knowledge and experience lead to the acquisition of idiosyncratic information which, in turn, allows individuals to discover entrepreneurial opportunities in which new economic activities result in generating profit (Smith, Moghaddam, & Lanivich, 2019). Prior knowledge may be a result of experience, including work and industry experience (Shepherd & DeTienne, 2005).

The above studies show that opportunity discovery is built on ontological perspectives of entrepreneurship. That is, opportunity discovery stems from the idea that opportunities are held independently from entrepreneurs; they are out there in the market waiting to be captured. Opportunities are held objectively even if no individuals are aware of their existence. In particular, opportunities are discovered by entrepreneurs due to *exogenous* shocks in pre-existing markets or industries (see Table 1 below).

2.2.3.2 Opportunity Creation

The opportunity creation perspective differs from the opportunity discovery perspective. Scholars who argue for opportunity creation contend that opportunities are not independent of entrepreneurs, but rather are created by entrepreneurs through ongoing entrepreneurial interactions and practices (Venkataraman, Sarasvathy, Dew, & Forster, 2012). Therefore, proponents of the opportunity creation perspective believe that entrepreneurs' activities and processes in the marketplace cause opportunities (A. W. Smith et al., 2019).

According to this view, entrepreneurs creatively experiment on contingencies, utilising their own capabilities, during the opportunity creation process (Dew, Read, Sarasvathy, & Wiltbank, 2008). These opportunities are generated from the "creative identification, combination and recombination of knowledge that is spread across people and firms" (Chandra, Styles, & Wilkinson, 2012, p. 94). Therefore, opportunities rely on human activities,

including the entrepreneur's perception about the opportunities and their beliefs about the resources accessible to pursue opportunities (Baker & Nelson, 2005). Created opportunities stem from: knowledge, experience (A. W. Smith et al., 2019), intuition, induction, and trial and error (Alvarez & Barney, 2007).

The above literature regarding opportunity creation shows that the concept is built on aspects of the constructionist view. Significantly, unlike in the discovery process, which assumes that opportunities are out there just waiting to be discovered, research on opportunity creation assumes that opportunities are constructed (created) by the entrepreneurs themselves (Alvarez et al., 2013). In this way, the opportunity creation view highlights the *endogenously* created opportunities by entrepreneurs themselves (see summary in Table 1 below).

Table 1: The difference between opportunity discovery and creation perspectives

	The Discovery perspective	**The Creation perspective**
Historical roots	Austrian economics, Individual Trait research, research of recognising opportunities.	Social Constructionism, Evolutionary Theory, Evolutionary realism.
Sources of competitive imperfections	Objective opportunities formed by exogenous shocks to existing markets and industries.	Enacted opportunities formed endogenously by entrepreneurs seeking to exploit them.
Ex ante différences in entrepreneurs	Important ex ante differences termed "alertness" that enable entrepreneurs to be aware of objective opportunities.	Differences may be the effect of enacting an opportunity

Adapted from "Forming and Exploiting Opportunities: The Implications of Discovery and Creation Processes for Entrepreneurial and Organizational Research" by Alvarez, S. A., Barney, J. B., & Anderson, P. (2012). *Organization science*, *24*(1), 301-317.

Just like the trait and behavioural approaches, the opportunity approach has also been subjected to criticism, with some scholars arguing that it does not contribute to a full understanding of entrepreneurship. The major critiques suggest abandoning the opportunity construct in entrepreneurship research (Davidsson, 2015; Davidsson et al., 2020; Foss & Klein, 2020; Kitching & Rouse, 2017).

Foss and Klein (2020) pointed out that the uncertainty concept has been a central theme of the entrepreneurial process and it is obscured by the opportunity construct. They add that what is meant by "opportunities" is simply a business idea, belief, or plan. Describing them as opportunities misleads practitioners and scholars into thinking that entrepreneurship is an easy task – what matters is a good idea (Foss & Klein, 2020). Alternatively, they suggest repositioning entrepreneurship research from a nexus between individual and opportunity to a nexus that includes (resource) heterogeneity and uncertainty. As mentioned earlier, calls to abandon the opportunity construct from entrepreneurship research includes works by Kitching

and Rouse (2017) and Davidsson et al. (2020). Kitching and Rouse (2017) suggest dispensing with the opportunity construct and, instead, investigate the actions of entrepreneurs as a contextual phenomenon. Davidsson et al. (2020) also promoted a similar idea, to investigate entrepreneurship with reference to the impacts of the external environment - referring to those impacts as external enablers. Kitching and Rouse's and Davidsson et al's views are illuminated further in the section below as they have influenced the central concept of this thesis.

Another significant critique regarding the suggestions to dispense with the opportunity construct includes the philosophical nature of how entrepreneurship should be looked at. As mentioned earlier, the discovery perspective (see Section 2.2.3.1 above) favours ontological beliefs as it assumes that opportunities exist independently from entrepreneurs; they are out there in the market waiting to be captured (Shane, 2012). The creation perspective (see Section 2.2.3.2 above) favours social constructionist views as it assumes that opportunities do not exist independently from entrepreneurs but are constructed (created) by the entrepreneurs themselves (Alvarez et al., 2013). The recent critiques suggest widening the scope of how opportunities are framed by philosophical assumptions. For example, Foss and Klein (2020) suggest looking at the phenomenon of entrepreneurship as a pragmatic inquiry. Kitching and Rouse (2017) view entrepreneurship through a critical realist inspired framework due to their assumption that an explanation of entrepreneurship requires a reference to both agent and context.

The chapter continues to explain how entrepreneurship is understood in this thesis. It is argued that entrepreneurial action occurs through interactions between community and religious contexts (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020). It proposes a reorientation of entrepreneurship on the basis that: (a) entrepreneurship is a process that involves a series of actions (Shepherd, 2015), (b) entrepreneurial action interacts within the context (Audretsch et

al., 2020; Kitching & Rouse, 2017), and (c) the explanation of entrepreneurial action requires agency (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Kitching & Rouse, 2017).

2.3 Entrepreneurial Action

The above review regarding the three approaches – trait, behavioural and opportunity – shows that each approach is based on distinctive assumptions to explain entrepreneurship. Each approach has attempted to explain entrepreneurship based on the assumptions that each approach is based on. Those attempts failed to capture the meaning of entrepreneurship as no single approach provides an accurate and complete picture (Kobia et al., 2010). The failures are evident by the respective critiques (e.g., Foss & Klein, 2020; Low & Macmillan, 1988; Smith et al., 1989; Venkataraman, 1997). Taken collectively, the critiques do not imply that these three approaches should be totally dispensed with regarding the scholarly inquiry of entrepreneurship. Instead, repositioning is required. For example, Audretsch et al. (2020) write that a one-dimensional view of entrepreneurship only provides a narrow view of entrepreneurship. They embrace the idea that the horizons of entrepreneurship research may be widened when it is contextualised.

Scholars identify that among the three approaches, the opportunity perspective has had significant attention and Venkataraman's (1997) work has been the most influential (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; Wright & Phan, 2020). As mentioned above, he viewed entrepreneurship as a field that "*seeks to understand how opportunities to bring into existence 'future' goods and services are discovered, created, and exploited, by whom, and with what consequences"* [italics in original] (Venkataraman, 1997, p. 120).

Despite its significance, recent critiques suggest that the opportunity approach does not provide enough boundaries for entrepreneurship (Davidsson et al., 2020) and it lacks conceptual clarity in providing a sound foundation for entrepreneurship research (Davidsson,

2015). Kitching and Rouse (2017) argue that research regarding entrepreneurship should not be based on the opportunity framework at all. With these suggestions, along with criticisms of the trait and behavioural approaches, new insights on how to view entrepreneurship have recently begun to emerge.

Davidsson (2015) suggests that external enablers (changes in external conditions such as changes in socio-cultural, political, economic, or natural environments; new technologies; and demographic or regulatory shifts) impact entrepreneurial action. Davidsson et al. (2020) further develop the notion of external enablers in terms of their characteristics, mechanism, and roles. They argue that this extension would provide a novel perspective to theorise entrepreneurial action.

Other suggestions in reconceptualising entrepreneurship include works by Shepherd (2015), Kitching and Rouse (2017), and Audretsch et al. (2020). Shepherd (2015) posits entrepreneurship is a process which involves a number of acts. Kitching and Rouse (2017) conceptualise entrepreneurial action within an analytical framework suggesting entrepreneurship is an emergent process interacting within structural and cultural contexts.

Certainly, the conceptualisation of entrepreneurship in this thesis contributes to the notion that research should depart from the opportunity framework and entrepreneurship may involve a series of entrepreneurial actions (Shepherd, 2015) interacting within the context (Audretsch et al., 2020; Kitching & Rouse, 2017). Context is an important element to explain entrepreneurial action because there are no context-free actions (Archer, 1995). Contextualisation is essential to understand the emergence of any entrepreneurial activity where entrepreneurship truly occurs (Audretsch et al., 2020). Creation of new ventures may be one such emergence (Davidsson et al., 2020).

Hence, entrepreneurial action is viewed "as a socio-historical process of creating goods and services for market exchange emergent from the *interaction* between entrepreneurs and their *structural* and *cultural* contexts" [emphasis added] (Kitching & Rouse, 2017, p. 560). Structure refers to the community where entrepreneurial action takes place. Religion refers to the socio-cultural system of designated actions.

Regarding the structural context of entrepreneurial action, scholars identify the importance of linking community as an essential context within which entrepreneurial action takes place (Santana et al., 2016). Even though the community is considered as an essential context in explaining entrepreneurship, most studies do not provide enough evidence (Vladasel, Lindquist, Sol, & van Praag, 2020). A community can be defined as enduring relationships among actors, often with geographic bounds (Fazlollahi et al., 2013). Entrepreneurs are manifested in communities; their actions may be both enabled and constrained by the communities.

Regarding the cultural context of entrepreneurial action, scholars identify religion as a distinct social aspect that has relevance for the actions of entrepreneurs (Shane, 1993). However, research focused on how religion influences and is influenced by entrepreneurship has been extremely limited (B. R. Smith, Conger, McMullen, & Neubert, 2019). This limited knowledge regarding the association of religion and entrepreneurship is still blurry (Pavlovich & Markman, in press). It is argued that religion promotes values within society (Block et al., 2019), sometimes encouraging entrepreneurship (Balog et al., 2014) and sometimes discouraging entrepreneurship (Wiseman & Young, 2014).

The focal religion in this research is Buddhism, which has had limited attention in entrepreneurship research (Block et al., 2019). Buddhism is a non-theistic religion and a philosophy originated from the teachings of Buddha (Rāhula, 2006). A detailed explanation

regarding its origins and principles, as well as the geographic context of study (Sri Lanka) are discussed in Chapter Four. In this geographic context where Buddhism is widespread, entrepreneurial action may be viewed within a framework – which entrepreneurial intentions are pursued, and how to ensure right livelihood in business (Valliere, 2008). In the case of Buddhist entrepreneurs, the teachings of Buddhism may provide a template to shape their actions. To better understand the processes of entrepreneurial action, therefore, requires an understanding of how entrepreneurial action is shaped in the social context, especially from a religious standpoint.

This chapter will continue to illuminate community and religion contexts to provide an understanding of their relationships to entrepreneurial action. These two sections follow a brief discussion regarding effectuation and entrepreneurial action to establish the fact that research that intends to theorise the actions of the entrepreneurs that include novices should dispense with the effectual logics. The effectual logics are more relevant for the examination of entrepreneurial action of expert (i.e., established) ventures (Read, Dew, Sarasvathy, Song, & Wiltbank, 2009).

2.4 Effectuation and Entrepreneurial Action

Effectuation is a theoretical explanation about processual elements of the entrepreneurial phenomenon (Ruiz-Jiménez, Ruiz-Arroyo, & del Mar Fuentes-Fuentes, 2020). The original idea of effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001) suggests two approaches are used by entrepreneurs in the process of entrepreneurial action: causation and effectuation. Causation stems from the rational decision making principles of classical microeconomics, while effectuation derives from cognitive sciences (Chandler, DeTienne, McKelvie, & Mumford, 2011). Causation denotes a rational, liner logic consistent with predictive planning (Wiltbank, Dew, Read, & Sarasvathy, 2006) of entrepreneurial action. According to Sarasvathy (2001, p. 252) the

causation logic is based on the idea that "the extent that we can predict the future, we can control it." The effectuation process relates to non-predictive strategies (Wiltbank et al., 2006) of entrepreneurial action. That is the controllable aspects of an unpredictable future with the underlying logic that "the extent that we can control the future, we do not need to predict it" (Sarasvathy, 2001, p. 252).

These underlying logics of causation and effectuation have been applied to strands of the literature of entrepreneurship. The relationships depend on the level of expertise of entrepreneurs. A key distinction between novice and expert entrepreneurial types is prominent (Ruiz-Jiménez et al., 2020). Effectuation logic is more applicable to and suitable for expert entrepreneurs than novices (Read et al., 2009). Because expert entrepreneurs acquire knowledge through experience, they have more expertise than the novice, and may apply contingency approaches rather than predictive ones with regard to entrepreneurial action (Ruiz-Jiménez et al., 2020). In addition, having previous venture experiences may enable the capacity to raise funds, recruit suitable employees, develop strong management practices (Hsu, 2007), and recognise new venturing opportunities in a dynamic environment (Baron, 2006). It can be argued that effectual behaviours are more likely to emerge within expert entrepreneurs as their set of skills generated through experience and expertise is more highly developed than in novice entrepreneurs. Hence, research that intends to theorise the actions of entrepreneurs that includes novices should dispense with the effectual logics.

2.5 Community Context of Entrepreneurial Action

2.5.1 What is a Community?

The term “community” has broad implications for many disciplines such as economics, anthropology, sociology, and political science. Each of these disciplines has its own way of defining a community. For example, economics defines communities based on geographic colocations. In political sciences, the definition of community uses tighter boundaries in which people participate in activities linked to institutions of law in local municipalities. Regardless of the discipline, Lumpkin, Bacq, and Pidduck (2018) recognise four types of communities: geographical community, community of identity, community of interest or solidarity, and intentional community. The following passages provide a brief overview of each.

2.5.1.1 Geographical Community

Regarding the communities defined in terms of geographic colocations, the term community suggests a variety of meanings such as “rural village”, “small country town”, or “large city”. For example, Marquis and Battilana (2009, p. 286) express a geographical community as “the populations, organisations, and markets located in a geographic territory and sharing, as a result of their common location, elements of culture, norms, identity and laws”. Geographic communities have been the most agreed form of community in the literature (Marquis, Lounsbury, & Greenwood, 2011). However, there is a need to recognise communities that contribute to a broader perspective that include virtual and transnational communities (Marquis et al., 2011).

2.5.1.2 Community of Identity

A community defined by identity involves commonly identifiable features regarding shared culture or ethnic heritage such as music, language, and ethics (Hsu & Hannan, 2005). As per the social identity theory that refers an individual's identity by his/her membership in social groups such as religious groups, nationality and ethnic groups, an individual derives emotional significance with others in the group, in this case, communities. Group membership engenders belonging, meaning, and positive distinctiveness (Hogg & Terry, 2014).

2.5.1.3 Community of Interest or Solidarity

Communities that are formed based on interest or solidarity are mainly centred around concerns such as equal access to public goods or minority rights (Lumpkin et al., 2018). As a result, members in the community bond together over a significant issue of interest concurrently in varied geographical spaces (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). For instance, microfinance that deals with the issue of financial inclusion can be framed as community of interest (Lumpkin et al., 2018).

2.5.1.4 Intentional Community

Intentional community is defined by the methods in which its members become involved (Lumpkin et al., 2018). Intentional communities differ from communities based on solidarity in that they are formed by and engaged in by individuals for their own purposes who are in positions to offer help and support each other. Individuals from intentional communities come together on a voluntary basis as they experience the same issue or situation (e.g., self-help groups or professional networking groups).

The above-mentioned types of communities illustrate their diversity and range of interpretations. The varied interpretations suggest that the idea of communities may defy simple definition (Lumpkin et al., 2018). Furthermore, the lack of a common definition can be recognised as an impediment to establish a common body of knowledge. An essential suggestion of this relation includes identifying communities in a broader perspective (Marquis, Lounsbury, & Greenwood, 2011). For example, Marquis et al. (2011) suggest to cease defining communities based on geographic colocations and focus more on defining communities that contribute to a broader perspective.

Marquis et al. (2011) defined communities as integrating economic, non-economic motivations as well as geographically close and distant affiliations. Their emphasis on communities includes "…collections of actors whose membership in the collective provides social and cultural resources that shape their action. Membership can result from a number of factors including propinquity, interest in a common goal, and common identity" (p. 16). A similar view to Marquis et al. (2011) can be seen in Freeman and Audia (2006) where they define community as enduring relationships among actors.

2.5.2 The Relationship between Community and Entrepreneurship

The relationship between entrepreneurs and their communities is a relatively neglected topic in the literature (Lyons, Alter, Audretsch, & Augustine, 2012). The association between entrepreneurs and their communities can cause misunderstanding and tension due to the complexities of the relationship. Most research recognises the relationship between community and entrepreneurs as a one-way relationship, but there is a call to examine the interdependence between community and entrepreneurship (McKeever et al., 2015). Entrepreneurial action can have both productive and unproductive impacts on communities, and communities can hinder or facilitate the actions of entrepreneurs (Lyons et al., 2012; McKeever et al., 2015).

This section continues to focus on the interconnection between community and entrepreneurship stemming from the idea that research should focus on examining their relevance to each other. Entrepreneurs are manifested in communities and their actions can be shaped by community involvement. Further, communities can be shaped by entrepreneurial outcomes (McKeever et al., 2015). As Santana et al. (2016) write, the effort to understand the phenomenon of entrepreneurship has generally favoured two approaches – internal and external – and those approaches can be brought together by bringing a community aspect to entrepreneurship research.

The internal approach focuses on the entrepreneur and stems from the idea that entrepreneurial thinking and action is largely driven by the idiosyncratic disposition, experience or knowledge of the entrepreneur (Santana et al., 2016). As reviewed above, entrepreneurs were defined by who they are (i.e., the traits approach) and what they do (i.e., the behavioural approach). In the internal approach, the environment is seen as constant and the variations between individuals are regarded as the sources of action (Dimov, 2010). The external approach focuses on the external environment and stems from the idea that changes in the external environment serve as the stimulus for entrepreneurial action (Shane, 2003). In this approach, the entrepreneur is seen as constant and the variations in environmental variables influence the actions of the entrepreneurs (Santana et al., 2016).

The literature highlighted to date suggests that even though these two perspectives contributed valuable insights into the nature of entrepreneurship, limitations occur when either perspective is used in isolation. As Santana et al. (2016) recognise, each of these perspectives has developed in parallel paths. These parallel and separate developments may limit the development of the entrepreneurship phenomenon. As Shane (2003, p. 3) states, “the phenomenon of entrepreneurship cannot be explained either by environmental forces or by

individual factors in the absence of the other". Hence, to develop cogent conceptualisations of entrepreneurship, researchers should forge robust connections between internal and external approaches (Santana et al., 2016). Santana et al, suggest community as an important context to forge the connection between internal and external approaches.

Understanding the community within which entrepreneurship occurs as an essential context provides important implications for research. *First*, it contributes to a clear conceptualisation of entrepreneurial action that includes both internal and external perspectives of entrepreneurship. *Second*, research on community allows scholars to examine the recursive relationship between human agency and structure (Santana et al., 2016). The structure is involved in the production of entrepreneurial action – enabling and constraining it – and the conditions of the social system shape the interconnection between the two (McMullen et al., 2020).

Research regarding the relationship between entrepreneurship and community has also being discussed in network and embeddedness literature. For example, Sanders and Nee (1996) state the importance of immigrant entrepreneurship: "[o]ur experiences in the field suggest that the family is often the main social organisation supporting the establishment and operation of a small business" (p. 235). In addition, studies (e.g., McKeever, Anderson, & Jack, 2014; Roxas & Azmat, 2014) show that the social community where individuals are manifested has important implications for entrepreneurship. Although the literature provides some evidence regarding the relationships between community and entrepreneurship, knowledge about its social mechanisms is still scarce (Dana, Gurau, Light, & Muhammad, 2020).

The other perspective which relates to community and entrepreneurship is the embeddedness perspective. In his earlier work Uzzi (1997) explains that research regarding embeddedness helps advance knowledge of how social structure influences economic life.

Essentially, the actors of society are embedded in concrete, concurrent system of social relations (Granovetter, 1985). The embeddedness perspective is relevant to entrepreneurship because it assists entrepreneurs to recognise social resources (Hansen, 2017). Embeddedness can also be a constraint for entrepreneurship (Jack & Anderson, 2002). This complexity regarding entrepreneurship and embedded communities still exists due to the contextual factors that shape individual beliefs, practices, and attitudes (Farmaki et al., 2020). One such essential contextual dimension that has important implications for entrepreneurial action is religion. The rest of the chapter examines the literature in this regard.

2.6 Religion Context of Entrepreneurial Action

2.6.1 Religion and Entrepreneurial Action

Entrepreneurship is considered a societal phenomenon (Shepherd et al., 2019; Steyaert & Katz, 2004). The relationship between entrepreneurship and society is multifaceted and complex, pervading a number of sectors, spaces and domains. In reclaiming the space of entrepreneurial engagements in modern societies, the actions of entrepreneurs can be seen as a cultural process drawing on contextually expressed discourses, including religious ones (Dodd & Gotsis, 2007). Dodd and Gotsis (2007) add that in spite of the symbolic and social power of religion, discourses of religion are poorly examined in the entrepreneurship literature.

The expression of religion in the management discipline is relatively young and it functions with limited theoretical boundaries (Tackney et al., 2017). Religion is expressed as "a search for significance in ways related to the scared," suggesting that individuals are goal-directed towards the essential things of God (Pargament, 1997, p. 32). Research suggests that religion manifests in different contexts such as work, ethics, experiences (sense of motivation and purpose), and expression (deeds, symbols and words) (Miller, Ewest, & Neubert, 2019). According to B. R. Smith et al. (2019), religion also manifests in entrepreneurial action,

sometimes discouraging it and sometimes encouraging it (Farmaki et al., 2020; Lu & Wu, 2020; Pavlovich & Markman, in press).

On the positive side, *first*, the literature suggests that in addition to financial motives, religion influences entrepreneurs to pursue entrepreneurship (B. R. Smith et al., 2019). According to Anderson, Drakopoulou-Dodd, and Scott (2000), the propensity for entrepreneurship is shaped by the different value orientations of religions. For instance, Muslims and Christians show a higher propensity for entrepreneurship compared to Hindus and Buddhists (Audretsch, Grilo, & Thurik, 2007). Liu, Xu, Zhou, and Li (2019) assert that the supporters of Western religions are risk-averse compared to those of Eastern religions.

Second, the literature provides some evidence that religion influences entrepreneurial behaviour (Henley, 2016) by enhancing, for instance, risk-taking behaviour (Jiang, Jiang, Kim, & Zhang, 2015). According to Kaptein (2019), the management of a venture can be significantly shaped by religion as entrepreneurs tend to encourage moral benefits, including trust and respect across the venture. Dodd and Gotsis (2007) found that entrepreneurs experience a bonus from the point of their respective religion in terms of strengthening psychological wellbeing (Dodd & Gotsis, 2007). Dodd and Gotsis further add that the literature regarding whether religious entrepreneurs act in a more ethical fashion than non-religious entrepreneurs is inconclusive.

On the negative side, the literature suggests that religion can inhibit entrepreneurship. For example, Parboteeah, Walter, and Block (2015) write that religion can operate as a regulatory framework limiting entrepreneurial pursuits. For instance, the prohibition of the consumption of pork and alcohol in Islam may provide restrictions on what Islamic entrepreneurs may produce and sell (Farmaki & Altinay, 2015). In this way, religious beliefs influence what is considered appropriate for entrepreneurial action. Some adherents of religion

believe that they have less control over their destiny. For example, the caste system in Hinduism exerts normative pressures on followers to choose occupations based on their caste (Mainali, Jafarey, & Montes-Rojas, 2017), thus restraining their action to pursue entrepreneurship.

Regardless of the positive and negative effect of religion on entrepreneurial action, there is another stream of literature that discusses religious value orientations. The orientations are discussed in terms of how they shape different actions of the entrepreneurs. As mentioned above, religion is a treasury of the most precious and sacred values of a society (Gursoy, Altinay, & Kenebayeva, 2017). Religion holds a collective influence on society through shaping the behaviour of individuals. Individuals who belong to different religions may therefore exert different actions shaped by their religions.

The Christian teachings of the *Bible* state that humankind is made in the image of God (Kovács, 2017). Thompson (2004) maintains that the core element of Christianity is that people are created to be equal in their dignity. A number of studies have examined which Christian value orientations impact the actions of entrepreneurs. In his recent work, Kovács (2020) discussed Christian values that have implications for entrepreneurship. Documenting Roman Catholic teachings, he explained that human dignity, justice, subsidiarity, charity, freedom, truth, responsibility, frugality, and common good shapes how Catholic entrepreneurs conduct entrepreneurial actions (Kovács, 2020). According to Kovács (2020) Christian values do not impose a burden on entrepreneurs, but, rather, reaffirm the spiritual significance of their vocation.

The Islamic teachings which are found in the teachings of the *Kuran* explain that the existence of a man comprises two parts – that of the body and the spirit (Kamil, Ali Hussain, & Sulaiman, 2011). In regard to entrepreneurship, running an honest business in accordance

with the Islamic religious creed is emphasised (Ramadan, 2003). Rehan, Block, and Fisch (2019) found that Islamic values such as cooperation, hard work, and gratitude positively influence for entrepreneurial intentions. They added that entrepreneurs who practice Islamic principles tend to harness entrepreneurial intentions that bring positive change to communities.

In summary, the literature demonstrates the complex relationship between religion and entrepreneurship. Some studies assert that religion encourages entrepreneurship, while some studies conclude the opposite. In addition, value orientations differ between religions. These varying results imply that the relationship between religion and entrepreneurship varies along with contextual factors, as the context shapes individual beliefs, practices, and attitudes (Farmaki et al., 2020). As Dodd and Gotsis (2007) recognise, when examining the relationship between entrepreneurship and religion, context-specificity is essential. De Run, Butt, Fam, and Yin Jong (2010) agree that there is no universal application of entrepreneurship and religion as varying religious affiliations have different impacts on the social fabric of the societal community.

The following section reviews the literature regarding Buddhism (the focal religion in this thesis) and entrepreneurial action.

2.6.2 Buddhism and Entrepreneurial Action

Buddhist economics is an important starting point to review the literature regarding the relationship between Buddhism and entrepreneurship due to its explanation of relevant Buddhist values in business. In addition, Buddhist economics was the first framework to explain the application of Buddhist principles to business. Schumacher (1973) introduced Buddhist economics. His seminal work, “Small is Beautiful”, linked to Buddhism and economics and challenged the basic principles of modern western economics such as cultivating desires, profit-maximisation, instrumental use of the world, self-interest-based

ethics, and creating markets. Schumacher developed the ideas of Buddhist economics while he was working with people in countries such as India, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka.

By challenging the above-mentioned basic principles of modern western economics, Schumacher (1973) proposed a strategy focusing on creating livelihood solutions which reduce suffering of all beings by practising non-violence, generosity, caring, genuine care, and negation (Zsolnai, 2007). In this way, Buddhist economics proposes strategies to transform business toward a more human and ecological form to promote peace, permanence, and happiness. Daniels (2005) identifies that Buddhist economics focuses on humanistic economics. Meanwhile, Mendis (1994) recognises that Buddhist economics focuses on the sustainable development of communities.

Buddhist economics laid a foundation for a wide range of research integrating several disciplines, including entrepreneurship. Research regarding the association between Buddhism and entrepreneurship has mostly favoured Buddhist values such as Right Livelihood, Compassion, Mindfulness, etc and their relationships with different aspects of entrepreneurship (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Buddhist tenets relevant in Business

Title of the work	Author and the year published	Buddhist tenets relevant in business
Small is beautiful	(Schumacher, 1973)	Non-violence, compassion, simplicity
Elements of Buddhist economics	(Alexandrin, 1993)	Compassion, moderation, mindfulness
Towards a progressive Buddhist economics	(Zadek, 1997)	Wisdom, compassion, responsibility
Tackling greed and achieving sustainable development	(Welford, 2006)	Mindfulness, moderation
Western economics versus Buddhist economics	(Zsolnai, 2007)	Simplicity, generosity, genuine care, non-violence
Buddhist economics as a new paradigm toward happiness	(Puntasen, 2007)	Compassion, wisdom, interconnectedness
The leaders' way	(Dalai Lama & Muyzenberg, 2009)	Mindfulness, compassion, wellbeing
Economic sufficiency and Santi Asoke	(Essen, 2011)	Compassion, moderation, mindfulness

Source: Constructed by the researcher

The literature suggests that Buddhist values, such as Karma, guide entrepreneurs to carry out business practices that impact society (Liu et al., 2019). According to Buddhism, enlightenment is the highest humanly attainable state. It is advised to not behave in a way that accumulates unwholesome Karma. For example, Buddhist entrepreneurs may think that the way that they treat stakeholders will later impact them in some way (Marques, 2012). These values may encourage entrepreneurs to undertake socially healthy business practices rather than merely pursuing monetary returns (Valliere, 2008). When broad stakeholders are considered, socially healthy business practices may help ventures secure scarce resources and improve the wellbeing of communities (Stoian & Gilman, 2017).

According to Buddhism, Karma suggests that life is closely related to the afterlife. One's current actions has consequences for the afterlife (Liu et al., 2019). This belief

encourages Buddhist entrepreneurs to take long-term orientations towards business (Marques, 2012). As Flammer and Bansal (2017) explain, a long-term orientation is mainly reflected in resource allocation decisions in relation to stakeholder relationships. Such an orientation assists to reinforce relationships with community members such as employees, customers, and societal members. For instance, compared to non-religious entrepreneurs, Buddhist entrepreneurs who exhibit a long-term orientation will find it easier to treat stakeholders with compassion (Marques, 2012).

Research regarding compassion and entrepreneurial action further explains that compassionate entrepreneurs tend to promote entrepreneurial decisions to protect the natural environment (see; Engel, Ramesh, & Steiner, 2020). For example, Shepherd and Williams (2014) in their study found that local individuals who were impacted by a natural disaster were motivated by compassion to build entrepreneurial ventures in order to address the needs of the community.

As Kovács (2017) explains, Buddhist economics refers to right livelihood, which is one of the essential conceptions of the "Noble Eightfold Paths". Right livelihood comes under the ethical conduct ('Sila') of the Noble Eightfold Path. An ethical decision is a decision that is both morally and legally acceptable to a larger community (Jones, 1991). From a Buddhist perspective, an ethical decision entails avoiding the deliberate (intentional) harming of other creatures or earning a living in a harmful way. However, research regarding right livelihood and entrepreneurial action provides inconclusive results. For example, Dana (1995) argues that right livelihood may militate against entrepreneurial action and thereby negatively affect a nation's economic development. In contrast, Valliere (2008) found that entrepreneurs do not recognise right livelihood as a hindrance to attaining their economic goals.

Another strand of literature regarding entrepreneurship and Buddhism explains that Buddhism can have both intrinsic and extrinsic influences on the actions of entrepreneurs. Intrinsic influences stem from religious values focusing on self-actualisation (Allport, 1966). For instance, Karma and impermanence influence Buddhist entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial action, such as the evaluation of entrepreneurial opportunities (Valliere, 2008). Extrinsic influences stem from the instrumental role of the religion, such as entrepreneurs building social relationships with community members (Allport, 1966).

2.7 Summary

The main aim of this chapter was to clarify how this study fits within the entrepreneurship literature and the relevance of the overarching research question of this study. The chapter began by reviewing the historical development of entrepreneurship research, including a discussion of the trait, behaviour, and opportunity approaches to entrepreneurship. Describing why these distinct approaches failed to provide enough boundaries for entrepreneurship scholarly inquiry, the chapter focused on entrepreneurial actions as a response to the critiques of these three approaches to entrepreneurship. This argument embraced the idea that the conceptualisation of entrepreneurial action requires a reference to the context. In this spirit, entrepreneurial action was conceptualised as an emergent process that interacts with community and religion contexts. The literature review also highlighted that empirical studies in relation to entrepreneurial action are limited.

Chapter Three will discuss the method and methodology employed to address the overarching research question of this study: *How do community and Buddhism interact with entrepreneurial action?*

Chapter Three

Methodology and Method

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the philosophical position of the study and to justify the methodology used to investigate the research question introduced in Chapter One. This chapter has four sections. Following this introduction, Section Two explains the main philosophical assumptions of this study – that of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Based on these philosophical assumptions, this section continues to explain different research paradigms. The research paradigm in which this research is best located is critical realism. The relevance of critical realism to this study's conceptualisation of entrepreneurial action is discussed. Section Three introduces the research design. It explains the fundamentals of critical realism and its associated methodological considerations to derive the research methodology – that of multiple cases with holistic design. The data collection strategy (semi-structured interview), case selection criteria, and ethical considerations are described. The data analysis technique, use of computer software, and research quality considerations that include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are explained. The chapter concludes with a summary.

3.2 Philosophical Assumptions

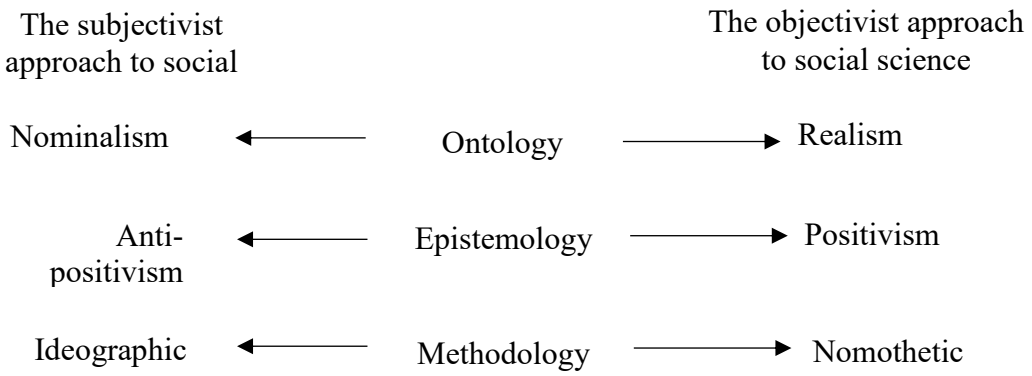
Researchers view the world through various lenses. Those lenses determine how a researcher sees the world and how she/he interprets and acts within that world. It is the conceptual lens through which the researcher examines the methodological precepts to determine the method of research that will be used to analyse data and interpret findings. The research process commences with certain philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of the social world and the manner in which it may be investigated. Hence, the philosophical assumptions have a significant impact on determining a research approach (Creswell, 2018).

The philosophical assumptions vary, and are dependent upon the preference of authors. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), the central philosophical assumptions include *ontology*, *epistemology*, and *methodology*. They describe these assumptions based on subjective and objective dimensions (see Figure 1 below).

Ontology refers to the very essence of the phenomenon under investigation (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). It is the assumption of whether social reality exists independently of human understanding. According to Campbell and Wasco (2000), ontology relates to accepting or rejecting the idea that there is an objective, real world. A subjectivist researcher takes a "nominalist" approach to understand the nature of reality, not admitting that there is a real structure of the world (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). An objectivist researcher takes a "realist" approach, comprehending that whether we label these structures or not, they exist as empirical entities. Thus, realists understand that the social world exists independently of an individual's appreciation of it (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

- The key ontological concerns are to understand the nature of "knowledge", and "reality" (Guba, 1990); they seek to answer whether the reality is external (objective) or internal (subjective) to the individual (Burrell & Morgan, 1979)

Figure 1: The Subjective – Objective Dimensions



Adapted from *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: elements of the sociology of corporate life*, by Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). London, England: Heinemann Educational Books.

Epistemology refers to the very essence of the "nature of knowledge", i.e., what knowledge is and how it is obtained (Campbell & Wasco, 2000), the nature of knowledge, either capable of transferring intangible forms, or whether it is an inspirational or spiritual-type that is difficult to transfer and personal in nature (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). A subjectivist researcher takes an "anti-positivist" approach, understands the world as relativistic, and gets directly involved in the activities which are to be studied. An objectivist researcher takes a "positivist" approach intending to explain the activities of the social world by rectifying regularities and causal relationships found in the elements of the research.

- Key epistemological concerns are: to understand the nature of the relationship between the knower and the known (Guba, 1990).

The ontological and epistemological assumptions discussed above, determine the *methodological* choices of a researcher. Hence, the methodology of a study is dependent on the researcher's stance that already taken in terms of the nature of "knowledge" and "reality". A subjectivist researcher takes an ideographic approach which assumes that scientific knowledge

is only understood by getting insider knowledge of the subject under investigation. An objectivist researcher takes a nomothetic approach applying quantitative methods and techniques such as surveys, scientific tests, and standardised research methods.

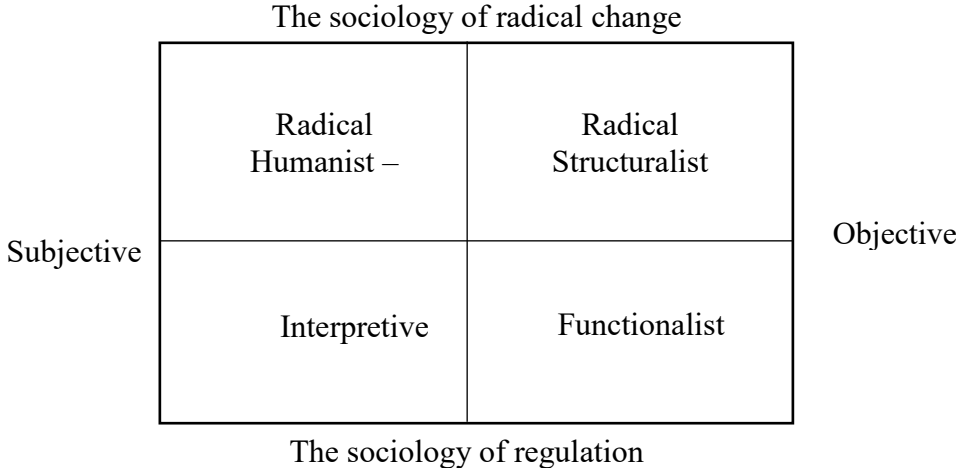
- Key methodological concerns are: how should the researcher go about findings out knowledge? (Guba, 1990).

The philosophical assumptions discussed in this section – that of *ontology*, *epistemology,* and *methodology* help locate the research in distinct "research paradigms" that will be explained in the next section.

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is defined "as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of the method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). Based on a specific set of beliefs, research paradigms offer principles, guidelines, methods, and techniques influencing how the research is conducted (Ticehurst & Veal, 1999). One of the most influential works on research paradigms is Burrell and Morgan's (1979) study which identified four exclusive social research paradigms – radical structuralist, functionalist, radical humanist, and interpretive (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Four paradigms for the analysis of social theory



Adapted from *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: elements of the sociology of corporate life*, by Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). London, England: Heinemann Educational Books.

According to Burrell and Morgan, radical structuralist and functionalist paradigms assume the objectivist point of view. Both paradigms take a standpoint classified as "realist, positivist, determinist, and nomothetic" approaches (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 34). The radical structuralist paradigm focuses on "radical change, emancipation and potentiality" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 34), while the functionalist paradigm focuses on offering rational explanations of social affairs.

The radical-humanist and interpretive paradigms favour the subjectivist approach with nominalist, anti-positivist, and ideographic assumptions. The radical-humanist paradigm focuses on transcending the limits of existing social arrangements of society. The interpretive paradigm attempts a subjectivist approach to analyse the social world implicitly. The interpretive paradigm intends to understand the world as it is from a subjective standpoint. These approaches of these two paradigms to social science is "nominalist, anti-positivist, voluntarist and ideographic" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 28).

Since Burrell and Morgan's seminal work, the paradigm dialogue has continued to evolve and has added more terminology to the subjective-objective continuum. For example, Guba and Lincoln (1994) recognised four paradigms – that of *positivism, post-positivism, critical theory,* and *constructivism*. Crotty (1998) proposed *positivism (and post-positivism), interpretivism, critical inquiry, feminism,* and *postmodernism*. However, recent work combines research worldviews into four main paradigms – that of *positivist, interpretive, empiricism* and *critical realism* (Hammersley, 2013; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015).

A positivist paradigm is based on the belief that all phenomena require rigorous measurements, thus acknowledging the need for hypothesis testing to test experimental control of variables. According to Hammersley (2013), rigorous "methods" mean "explicit procedures", with the assumption that the conclusions arrived at would be the same regardless of the cultural, personal, or social characteristics of the inquirer. This notion developed as "procedural objectivity" (Eisner, 1992). Therefore, positivists believe that knowledge produced is accurate and reliable if it has not been influenced by the "subjectivity" of the inquirer.

The next, and perhaps the closest school of thought to positivism is *empiricism* (Hammersley, 2013). According to Hammersley (2013), positivism and empiricism are considered synonymous. Similar to positivism, empiricism also assumes that knowledge is accessible only as an explanation of physical behaviour. Any claim to attitudes, intentions, and thoughts, or entities such as social institutions, is considered as inaccessible from rigorous analysis. Furthermore, empiricism insists on research questions for which relevant information is currently available (Hammersley, 2013).

During the second half of the twentieth century, positivism was criticised, and alternative philosophies were promoted. The interpretive paradigm emerged to address the

aspects that positivists and empiricist denied. Central to the interpretivist argument is an understanding of the social world "from the inside" – through common experience, empathy, and culture etc – rather than from the outside perspective in which positivists and empiricist argued (Hammersley, 2013). The key of an interpretive argument is that human behaviour is shaped by cultures in which people live, and those peculiar orientations of culture will not only influence what people believe but also what people do. Therefore, the concern of social scientists from the interpretive viewpoint is to document culturally-shaped human behaviour along with sources and consequences (Hammersley, 2013). Furthermore, interpretivist researchers argue that there is a need to understand what and why people do or why certain institutions exist and operate in specific ways. To do so, interpretivist researchers believe that reality is multiple and relative (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Clearly, this view contradicts with positivism. However, from both positivist and interpretivist paradigms, the critical realism paradigm emerged.

Critical realism is regarded as an extension of traditional paradigms as it favours key ontological and epistemological assumptions (Easton, 2010) [explained later]. Critical realists believe in the existence of independent reality and subjective interpretations of the social world (Hu, 2018). Due to the dual recognition of ontological and epistemological assumptions, critical realism is regarded as a distinctive research paradigm. This is the paradigm where this research is best located. The following section introduces the research design, its methodological considerations along with a detailed explanation of critical realism.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Critical Realism

3.3.1.1 Entities, Powers, and Systems

In his seminal work, Bhaskar (1978) suggested that the universe, as well as the social world, is a *stratified and open system of emergent entities* [emphasis in original] (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018, p. 202). The discussion of Bhaskar's stratified ontology requires connotations of its principles, and thus Sayer's (1992) work is identified as a useful inaugural point (Hunt, 2003). In his work, Sayer identified eight key assumptions of critical realism. The following is the extract from his work.

1. The world exists independently of our knowledge of it.
2. Our knowledge of the world is fallible and theory-laden. Concepts of truth and falsity fail to provide a coherent view of the relationship between knowledge and its object. Nevertheless, knowledge is not immune to empirical check and its effectiveness in informing and explaining successful material practice is not mere accident.
3. Knowledge develops neither wholly continuously, as the steady accumulation of facts within a stable conceptual framework, nor discontinuously, through simultaneous and universal changes in concepts.
4. There is necessity in the world; objects—whether natural or social— necessarily have particular powers or ways of acting and particular susceptibilities.
5. The world is differentiated and stratified, consisting not only of events, but objects, including structures, which have powers and liabilities capable of generating events. These structures may be present even where, as in the social world and much of the natural world, they do not generate regular patterns of events.
6. Social phenomena such as actions, texts and institutions are concept dependent. We not only have to explain their production and material effects but to understand, read or

interpret what they mean. Although they have to be interpreted by starting from the researcher's own frames of meaning, by and large they exist regardless of researchers' interpretation of them. A qualified version of point 1 therefore applies to the social world. In view of points 4–6, the methods of social science and natural science have both differences and similarities.

7. Science or the production of any kind of knowledge is a social practice. For better or worse (not just worse) the conditions and social relations of the production of knowledge influence its content. Knowledge is also largely—though not exclusively—linguistic, and the nature of language and the way we communicate are not incidental to what is known and communicated. Awareness of these relationships is vital in evaluating knowledge.
8. Social science must be critical of its object. In order to be able to explain and understand social phenomena we have to evaluate them critically (Sayer, 1992, p. 5).

Sayer's assumptions about critical realism imply that it captures both ontological and epistemological stances. For example, points 1, 4 and 5 set out the ontological position, assuming the belief of the existence of an independent real world "out there". Furthermore, points 2, 3, 6, and 7 set out the propositions for social construction (epistemology). These contradictory views of ontology and epistemology, therefore, sets the principal tenet of critical realism (Easton, 2010; Maxwell, 2012a). According to Easton (2010) "critical realists resolve this tension by arguing that the world is socially constructed but not entirely so" (p.120).

These ontological and epistemological commitments of critical realism suggest that it is a comparatively open and a fluid research paradigm, mainly due its stratified nature which warrants varied methods for richer conceptualisations. For example, critical realism allows the

researcher to switch between methods (Ackroyd, 2004), and counters the critique of paradigm incommensurability (Weaver & Gioia, 1994).

The next sections illuminate the stratified nature of critical realism. Bhaskar's (1978) philosophy of science, which reinforced the idea that the universe as well as the social world is a *stratified and open system of emergent entities*, can be explained by segregating its meaning into simple definitions – entities, powers, systems (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). Fleetwood (2005) identifies entities (objects) not merely as collections of parts, but rather as "anything" which makes a difference. Therefore, individuals, organisations, and institutions are entities. It should be noted that entities and variables as two contrasting views. Sayer (1992) added that "the concept of variable that is used in quantitative analysis is an indifferent one as regards causal explanation: variables can only register (quantifiable) change, not its cause" (p.180). Therefore, a realist's explanation of entities/objects involves the primary nature and capacities of "things" rather than measurable properties (i.e., variables) (Easton, 2010). Blundel (2007) added the term "structures" to refer to how an object is created.

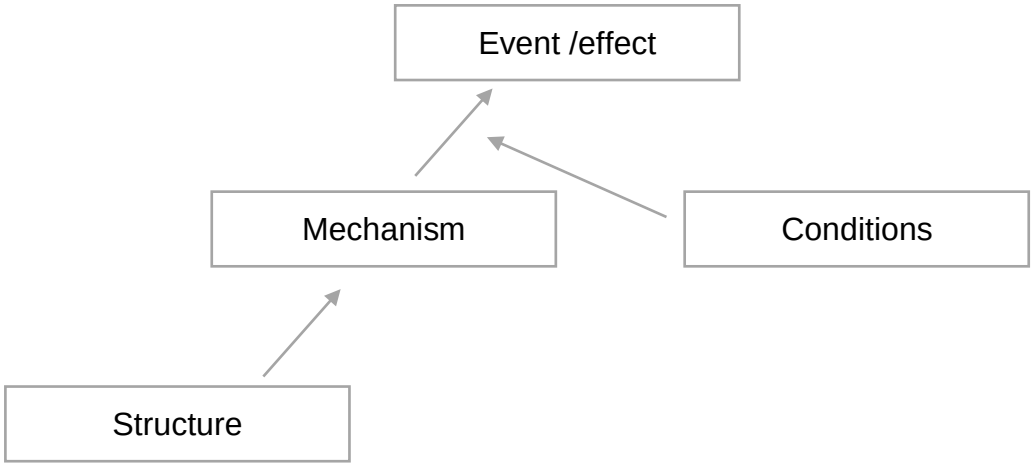
As a result of the structure (e.g., community), objects constitute certain causal powers (Blundel, 2007) and liabilities (Easton, 2010). Vincent and O'Mahoney (2018) added that causal powers depend on related properties of its parts. The causal powers possess capacities, potentials, or abilities to act in a particular way to reinforce activities (Lawson, 1997).

The term "mechanisms" is used by critical realists when explaining how an object's causal powers are exercised (Blundel, 2007). In addition, mechanisms transform entities (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). Bhaskar (1978) described mechanisms as "ways of acting of things". Easton (2010) added that in explaining causality, it is required to identify entities and mechanisms that connect and combine events to occur. This is important, as change often occurs when powers of entities interact with another (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018), for

example, organisations are acquired by other organisations. According to Blundel (2007) mechanisms reinforce phenomena as well.

However, causal powers are not automatically activated; rather, they are subject to the availability of other conditions (i.e., the context). Similarly, as Sayer (2000, p. 58) has claimed, "a particular mechanism can produce completely different actions at different times, and inversely, the same event can have completely different causes". For an instant, two entrepreneurs can have a similar capacity to become successful. However, due to varying conditions (existing socio-structural, and religious conditions of their respective contexts), only one may have attained his/her potential. Another possible implication is that some events can be the outcome of a completely dissimilar pattern of causes (Blundel, 2007). The central theme of critical realism is, therefore, to differentiate these contingent relationships between mechanisms (Blundel, 2007).

Figure 3: The critical realist view of causation



The Empirical, the Actual and the Real

The above explanation depicts how critical realism commits to ontological and epistemological concerns. However, critical realism is more complicated. Citing Bhaskar's

(1978) work, Vincent and O'Mahoney (2018, p. 203) added that "*stratified* or "depth ontology" makes a distinction between the 'empirical', the 'actual' and the 'real'" [emphasis in original]. The first level, the *empirical*, "is the realm of events as we experience them" (Fletcher, 2017, p. 183). Vincent and O'Mahoney (2018, p. 204) added, "empirical is what we perceive to be the case". At this level, objects are measured empirically using the subjectivity of the researcher. However, human interpretation and experience are often used to mediate these events. This is the level of reality where all the meanings, actions, and decisions, occur – but most importantly, these events can be causal (Fletcher, 2017). The middle level, the *actual*, refers to events that happen with time and space. At this level, the events can be "different to what we perceive to be the case" (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018, p. 204). Therefore, the actual level does not reinforce the human experience. Events at the actual level occur whether we experience or interpret them or not; also, these events are often different from what one observed at the empirical level (Danermark, 2002). The final level, the *real*, discusses causal mechanisms or structures (Fletcher, 2017; Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). Causal mechanisms or structures are the intrinsic properties of an object that are causal forces to produce events. Therefore, the critical realists' emphasis is to explain social events by means of causal mechanisms and the effects they can have throughout the empirical, the actual and the real levels (Fletcher, 2017).

3.3.2 Critical Realism and Entrepreneurial Action

As mentioned earlier, this research favours critical realism as the philosophical stance to explain entrepreneurial action. The aspects of critical realism that govern the conceptualisation of entrepreneurial action of this thesis are explained below.

First, this research holds the assumption that social objects are intransitive: that is, social objects exist and act independently of the researcher's knowledge (Bhaskar, 1978). The

existence of social objects depends on human agents holding an idea of what they are doing when they act in certain ways to produce such object, intentionally or inadvertently (Bhaskar, 1978). Entrepreneurial action is also such an object. For example, new ventures emerge because of the agents (entrepreneurs, money lenders, customers, and family members) involved. Agents may be involved intentionally or inadvertently in the emergence of new ventures.

Second, as mentioned earlier, critical realists believe that the social world comprises distinct domains: the empirical (what we perceive to be the case), the actual (the events that can be different from "what we perceive to be the case") and the real (generative causal powers that produce the actual level) (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). Entrepreneurial action may be an explanation of generative causal powers and events that may or may not be observed at the empirical level. Theorising entrepreneurial action as a mechanism caused by generative causal powers and events may therefore be a persuasive conceptualisation. The existence of social objects is both agent- and context-dependent. In the context of entrepreneurial action, it may require a reference to both agent (i.e., entrepreneur) and context (Kitching & Rouse, 2017). The context can be separated into structure and culture (Kitching & Rouse, 2017). Favouring these conceptions of critical realism, this research argues that the actions of the entrepreneur are shaped by the interactions between structural and religious contexts. Structure equates to the community where the entrepreneurial venture is manifested. Religion equates to the social-cultural system of designated actions. Hence, this research takes a critical realist approach to position the research in a methodology that is qualitative in nature.

3.3.3 Critical Realism Method

Critical realism is methodologically comprehensive (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). This is mainly due to the stratified nature of realism, and it permits varied methods for richer

conceptualisations. Critical realism does not support a particular type(s) of research method(s) and techniques exclusively, but realism allows the researcher to switch between methods (Ackroyd, 2004; Maxwell, 2012a). As Ackroyd (2000) explains, critical realism favours qualitative methods in understanding the social world. The above-mentioned critical realists' attempt to understand the "real world", which exists independently from the human perceptions and constructions may be captured by using qualitative methods.

In their work, Edwards, O'Mahoney, and Vincent (2014) compiled a series of methodologies regarding critical realism. The methodologies included grounded theory (Kempster & Parry, 2014; Oliver, 2012), disclosure analysis (Sims-Schouten & Riley, 2014), interviewing (Smith & Elger, 2014), and case studies (Ackroyd, 2004; Easton, 2010; Hu, 2018). Given the wide range of critical realist methodological options, it is essential to select the most effective method to examine the social reality of the current research – that of *"How do community and Buddhism interact with entrepreneurial action?"*

Case studies, compared to other research methodologies, seem to provide much validity for research driven by the critical realist paradigm. For example, Easton (2010), Wynn and Williams (2012), and Hu (2018) considered case studies as the research method most compatible with the critical realist paradigm. Easton (2010) also acknowledges Sayer's (2000) conceptions of critical realism and case study research. Kessler and Bach (2014) argue the use and importance of case studies in realist-based research in examining social events in contexts to divulge the underlying mechanisms and causal powers that reflect structure and agency relationships. In general, the case study approach is useful for exploratory research addressing "how" and "why" questions (Yin, 2014).

3.3.4 Case Study Research

3.3.4.1 Overview

Case studies are extensively used in organisational studies and social science. They can be defined as a research strategy which focuses on recognising the dynamics present within single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989). Even though some argue the case study approach is a method, as opposed to a methodology, there is strong evidence supporting the latter view (Creswell, 2018; Hartley, 2004; Yin, 2014; Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2009). This study identifies case study research as a methodology to examine the phenomenon under investigation.

As Robson (2002) writes, case studies provide "an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence" (p. 178). The case study strategy includes interviews, observations, and document analysis. According to Yin (2014), cases include "individuals,' 'organisations', 'processes', 'programmes', 'neighbourhoods', and even 'events' (p. 17). Case study research involves detailed investigations, often with data collected in different time periods, within their context (Hartley, 2004). Hartley adds that the phenomenon under investigation is not isolated from the context because the aim is to examine how behaviour and/or processes are influenced by and influence context. Case study research is considered a flexible strategy. It is capable of adapting and probing areas of planned but also an emergent theory (Hartley, 2004). This needs an accurate approach to the research design – i.e., the formulation of research questions and data collection.

3.3.4.2 Why Case Studies?

This research employs a case study approach for several reasons. *First*, case studies provide useful evidence to understand how the context is impacting or influencing social

processes (Hartley, 2004). This research gives a reference to both the context and agent to examine entrepreneurial action (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020). The context (i.e., structure and religion) interacts with the entrepreneur (i.e., the agent) while shaping his/her actions.

Second, case studies are useful to explore new or emerging processes (Hartley, 2004). This research favours the premise that entrepreneurship unfolds over time, and encompasses different actions. In this way, this research departs from conceptualising entrepreneurial action solely based on specific themes of entrepreneurship. For example, Alvarez, Barney, McBride, and Wuebker (2017) recognise entrepreneurial opportunities as the central theme of entrepreneurial action. This research contributes to a process perspective of entrepreneurial action conceptualised as "how goods and services come into being through interactions between entrepreneurs and their *structural* and *cultural* contexts" [emphasis added] (Kitching & Rouse, 2017, p. 571). Hartley (2004) argues that case studies that favour processes help generate theories.

Third, case studies are useful where the examination is being made of individuals who are engaged in unusual, informal, secret, or even illicit activities. Such research participants may not provide all the relevant information in a one-off interview. They may need to be contacted a number of times, and case studies provide a valid approach for such a mechanism (Hartley, 2004). The semi-structured interview planned for this research relies on contacting research respondents more than once if needed. Follow-up interviews will be conducted to gather rich and coherent information regarding the phenomenon under investigation.

Fourth, case studies are beneficial to answer "why" and "how" research questions (Yin, 2014). The question of this research is broad and exploratory in nature addressing "how" questions – that of *"How do community and Buddhism interact with entrepreneurial action?"*

Finally, the case study approach is a useful strategy to examine a geographically specific phenomenon. According to Ghauri and Holstius (1996), macro-environmental factors of specific geographic locations can be effectively studied using case studies. This study focuses on Sri Lanka, a collective society where 80 per cent of the population are Buddhist. The actions of entrepreneurs may have a profound impact on their religion and communities. In fact, this specific research context – that of Sri Lanka – is new to entrepreneurial action literature. The case study approach is more suited to capture the intricacies of religion, community, and entrepreneurial action.

3.3.5 Unit of Analysis

Unit of analysis is one of the primary elements that express what the "case" is about (Yin, 2014). It is fundamental in understanding, preparing, and implementing a case study design (Patton, 1990). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the case in effect acts as the unit of analysis of the study. This is consistent with Patton's (1990) view, which did not find any distinction between case and unit of analysis. He argues that "[c]ases are units of analysis" (Patton, 1990, p. 447). This study focuses on the interaction between the action of the entrepreneurs' action and community and religion contexts. More specifically, this study examines cases of Buddhist entrepreneurs who own entrepreneurial ventures. *Hence, the unit of analysis equates to a Buddhist entrepreneur*.

3.3.6 Single vs Multiple Case Designs

According to Yin (2014), there are four types of case designs that vary along with single and multiple case studies with varied design situations involving unitary or multiple units of analysis. These case designs are as follows.

3.3.6.1 Type 1 and 2: Single-case (Holistic and Embedded designs)

Usually, single-case designs are considered applicable in situations where a particular case is crucial for testing a well-formulated theory (Yin, 2014). A single case study is analogous to a single experiment. There are some situations where a single case is considered appropriate such as, critical, unusual (i.e., extreme), common, revelatory, or longitudinal cases (Yin, 2014). The *first* rationale for the single case study, that of a critical case, refers to the use of a single case to examine a theory. The second rationale for a single case is an extreme or unusual case. An extreme case is usually expected to deviate from theoretical norms. For example, research examining the unusual behaviour regarding a specific injury or disorder may employ an extreme case. The *third* rationale is that of a common case employed to capture conditions and circumstances of an everyday situation. The *fourth* rationale for a single case is a revelatory case. A revelatory case is used to analyse a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible to social science inquiry. *Finally*, the longitudinal case is employed to examine a single case over a period of time. A single case study can either be holistic or embedded. A single case study that does not involve units of analysis at more than one level referred to as a holistic design (i.e., type 1). In a situation where the single case involves more than one unit of analysis, it is referred to as an embedded design (i.e., type 2) (see Figure 4 below).

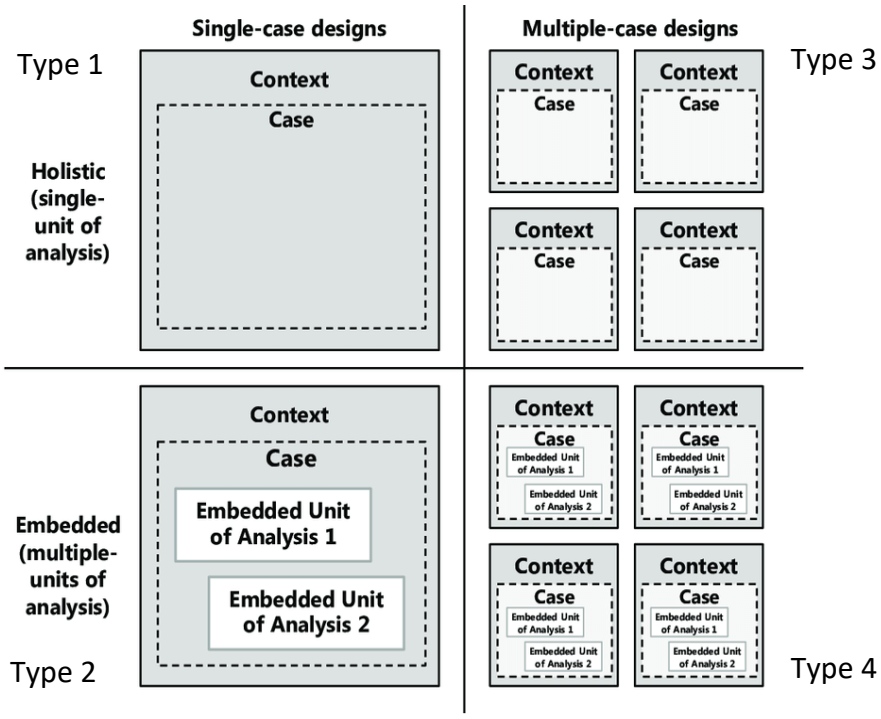
3.3.6.2 Type 3 and 4: Multiple-case (Holistic and embedded designs)

When a case study is extended to examine a number of organisations or individuals and compares them to obtain conclusions, such designs are called multiple-case designs (Yin, 2014). According to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) multiple cases are considered more robust than single case designs due to their compelling nature. Yin (2014) adds, that robustness is attained only by following a replication design, that is, cases are selected on a non-random

basis to predict similar results or to predict contrasting results but for anticipative reasons (i.e., theoretical replication).

Multiple case designs can be holistic or embedded. In other words, multiple case study research can comprise multiple embedded cases or multiple holistic cases. The difference between these two variants depends on the phenomenon being investigated. This research is best suited to multiple cases with a holistic design. As mentioned above, this study comprises one unit of analysis – that of Buddhist entrepreneurs. Those entrepreneurs are variably positioned in different contexts making the study one of multiple cases with holistic design.

Figure 4: Basic types of designs for case studies



Adapted from *Case study research : design and methods* (5th ed.), by Yin, R. K. (2014). Los Angeles: SAGE.

3.3.7 Data Collection

3.3.7.1 Case Selection Criteria

The main objective of this study is to theorise entrepreneurial action rather than to test theory regarding entrepreneurial action. Hence, theoretical sampling is regarded as more appropriate than stratified or random sampling methods (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Theoretical sampling allows the sample to evolve of its own accord as data is collected (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). In this spirit, the researcher deliberately searched for cases within the unit of analysis mentioned above – that of Buddhist entrepreneurs who own entrepreneurial ventures – to produce contrasting results.

The term "entrepreneur" in this research is defined as a business founder, who is able to mediate his or her values, especially Buddhist religious values, in business. Allowing the heterogeneity criterion in order to achieve variation among the cases (Flick, 2014), this research will select both novice, habitual and portfolio entrepreneurs. Novice entrepreneurs are individuals with no prior experience as a business founder, habitual founders are individuals with prior experience as a business founder, and portfolio entrepreneurship is defined as the discovery and exploitation of two or more opportunities (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2008). Therefore, a portfolio entrepreneur is defined in terms of opportunities, and not in terms of businesses (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2008).

3.3.7.2 The Choice of Interview

A social interaction based on a conversation is considered to be an interview (Warren, 2015). According to Burgess (1991, p. 102), interviews are "conversations with a purpose". Interviews serve different purposes in qualitative research. Interviews are relevant for

exploratory studies as they enable rich information that is difficult to gather via quantitative techniques (Richards, 2009).

As Richards (2009) writes, there are three types of interviews: open interview, structured interview, and semi-structured interview. Open interviews usually use questions that are not pre-determined. Open interviews are mostly suitable for situations where the direction of the interview is determined by the participant's contribution. Structured interviews collect data in a controlled form. Precise information that is pre-determined will be investigated during the interview. Semi-structured interviews are influenced by open and structured interviews. Similar to the open interview, semi-structured interviews give priority to the respondent, but within the framework presented by the interview guide (Richards, 2009).

This study employs semi-structured interviews to elicit data from study participants. According to Easton (2010), semi-structured interviews better suited for critical realist studies compared to other interview techniques. The interview design of this study is consistent with Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) seven stages of qualitative interviewing: thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying, and reporting.

First, thematising refers to the formation of the research question. The overarching research question pertinent to the study was developed in Chapter One. *Second*, designing entails planning the study. The geographic context of the study is Sri Lanka (see Chapter 4). Purposive sampling was used to select the Buddhist entrepreneurs who were interviewed. This purposeful selection of theoretically useful cases is based on the relevance of generalisability of a realist case study research (Easton, 2010; Wynn & Williams, 2012). According to their argument, realist case studies do not generalise their findings to a larger population, thus a representative sample is not a necessity.

Third, interviewing refers to the conduct of the interview. Buddhist entrepreneurs were interviewed face-to-face. With the minimal intervention of the researcher, the participant was asked to describe his entrepreneurial journey. The study participants were given the freedom to talk about the areas that interest them the most. However, as directed by the interview guide, the interviewer paid attention to the critical areas under investigation such as community involvement and the role of the participant's religion in entrepreneurial action. This interview approach generated rich information as the study participants freely expressed their experiences in a natural flow.

There were 24 entrepreneurs in the study. Interviews were in Sinhala (the official language for Buddhists in Sri Lanka) and three of the participants were female: Participant P (the strawberry jam producer) Participant Q (the jewellery maker) and Participant W (the owner of an organic restaurant and a farm). As mentioned earlier, the term "entrepreneur" in this research is defined as a business founder who is able to mediate his or her values, especially Buddhist religious values, in business. Research included 15 novice, 3 habitual and 6 portfolio entrepreneurs to fulfil the heterogeneity criterion in order to achieve variation among the cases.

There were two rounds of interviews conducted in this study. The first round was conducted in Sri Lanka between January - June 2019. The second round (the follow-up interviews) was conducted in New Zealand during March - April 2020. The researcher expected to visit Sri Lanka to conduct follow-up interviews. However, the follow-up interviews were conducted over the phone due to the border restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. All interviews were conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines provided by the University of Waikato, New Zealand (see section, 3.3.7.3 below for details). A summary of the interviews is shown in Table 3.

Fourth, transcribing refers to the conversion of audio-recorded interview to usable text. As mentioned earlier, the interviews are conducted in the official language for Buddhists in Sri Lanka – that of Sinhala. Once the transcribing was complete, the transcripts were sent to respective study participants for their approval. The interviews were translated into English by the researcher for analysis.

Fifth, data analysis. Data analysis for this research followed the well-established principles of inductive qualitative research (e.g., Gioia et al. (2013)). Inductive thematic analysis is carried out using an open-coding approach (Gioia et al., 2013). A detailed explanation of the data analysis is given below (see section 3.3.8).

Table 3: A summary of the interviews

Designator	Participant	Number of interviews
A	The T-shirt manufacturer	3
B	E-bay drop shipping business owner	3
C	The chairman of a holding company	2
D	The owner of a computer software engineering company	1
E	The chairman of a real estate development company	1
F	The chairman of a high-tech company	1
G	The chairman of a business conglomerate	1
H	The chairman of a premier software development company	1
I	The chairman of a business conglomerate	1
J	The owner of a software development company	1
K	The chairman of a dairy product company	1
L	The chairman of a business conglomerate	1
M	The money broking company owner	1
N	The cane furniture manufacturer	1
O	The refrigerator manufacturer	1
P	The strawberry Jam producer	1
Q	The Jewellery maker	3
R	The owner of the water-care company	1
S	The owner of a career guidance agency	1
T	The chairman of a business conglomerate	1
U	The bag producer	3
V	Timber mill owner	2
W	The owner of an organic restaurant and a farm	1
X	The restaurant owner	3
Total		**36**

Source: Research data

Sixth, verifying refers to research quality considerations undertaken to ensure the *reliability* and *validity* of interview data. According to Yin (2014), reliability and validity of qualitative research design can be judged according to specific logical tests. Concepts that have been offered for these tests include: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. There are a number of strategies put in place in this study to ensure reliability and validity of the interview data. Section 3.3.10 explains the details.

Seventh, reporting refers to the communication of the findings of the study. Reporting the findings of this research involved presenting interview quotes in the form of a dialogue. Dialogues refers to actual examples of interviews that relate to the themes that resulted from the analysis of the data.

3.3.7.3 Ethical Considerations

This research complies with the ethical considerations provided by the University of Waikato, New Zealand: Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations (UoW, 2020). According to the guidelines, the researcher is required to obtain approval from the University of Waikato, Management School's Ethics Committee prior to commencing data collection. The initial contact of study participants began by sending them the cover letter (see below Appendix A: 11.1), participant information sheet (see below Appendix B: 11.2), and consent form (see below Appendix C: 11.3).

The cover letter introduces the objectives of the research. The participant information sheet covers all the relevant information that a study participant should know, such as, the type of interview (face-to-face), expected duration, and language. Further, a detailed explanation about the confidentiality of the participant's data, their right to decline to take part in the research, the protection of their anonymity, the duration and security measures of data storage, the participant's right to access the information given, and the procedure of withdrawing from the study was provided.

3.3.8 Data Analysis

Analysis of qualitative data is one of the least developed features of case studies (Yin, 2014). Whilst quantitative researchers seek reliability of data, qualitative researchers focus on developing new theory. The data analysis method of this research favours the thematic

approach. “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Yet, thematic analysis is understood as a very flexible method with no clear agreement about what thematic analysis is and how one goes about doing it (Tuckett, 2005).

Braun and Clarke (2006) recognise two primary ways of conducting thematic analysis – that of inductive or “bottom-up approach” or theoretical or deductive or ‘top-down approach’. In the inductive thematic approach, themes recognised are heavily linked to the data themselves (Patton, 2015). In this way, the inductive approach has similarity to grounded theory. As Braun and Clarke (2006) write, inductive thematic analysis involves coding data without trying to fit the data into a pre-existing coding frame. In this way, the inductive thematic analysis is data-driven. Yet, researchers cannot totally separate themselves from their epistemological and theoretical commitments (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The deductive thematic approach is more analytic or theoretical driven, thus more explicitly analyst-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This form of data analysis approach tends to provide a less rich explanation of the data overall. The deductive approaches usually commence with existing theory and propositions (Yin, 2014). The themes derived from the data are guided by the theory and propositions, making the approach theory-driven.

The selection between inductive and deductive thematic analysis determines how and why a researcher codes the data. Very specific research questions usually involve theoretical thematic analysis while non-specific research questions that can evolve through the coding process involve inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This research favoured the inductive thematic analysis technique due to the researcher’s interest in evolving coding themes from the data itself without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame guided by theory.

In this research, inductive thematic analysis was carried out using an open-coding approach (Gioia et al., 2013). The open-coding approach involved identifying, categorising, and labelling the study participants' direct statements (i.e., first-order codes) that were then organised into more theoretical conceptions (i.e., second-order themes). The second-order themes were condensed into more general theoretical conceptions – that of overarching theoretical dimensions. First-order codes were generated by reviewing interview transcripts to recognise words, lines, or dialogue that represent a primary concept or idea. While preserving the participant's meanings, labels were assigned to capture first-order codes.

Second-order themes involve clustering first-order codes into more meaningful higher-order themes. First-order codes were compared over time to aggregate second-order themes. As Gioia et al. (2013) write, this level of analysis requires a decision, whether the emerging themes suggest concepts that might assist the researcher to describe and explain the phenomenon under investigation. The workable set of themes and concepts were further investigated to determine whether it is possible to distil the second-order codes even further into second-order "aggregate dimensions" (Gioia et al., 2013) - that of overarching theoretical dimensions.

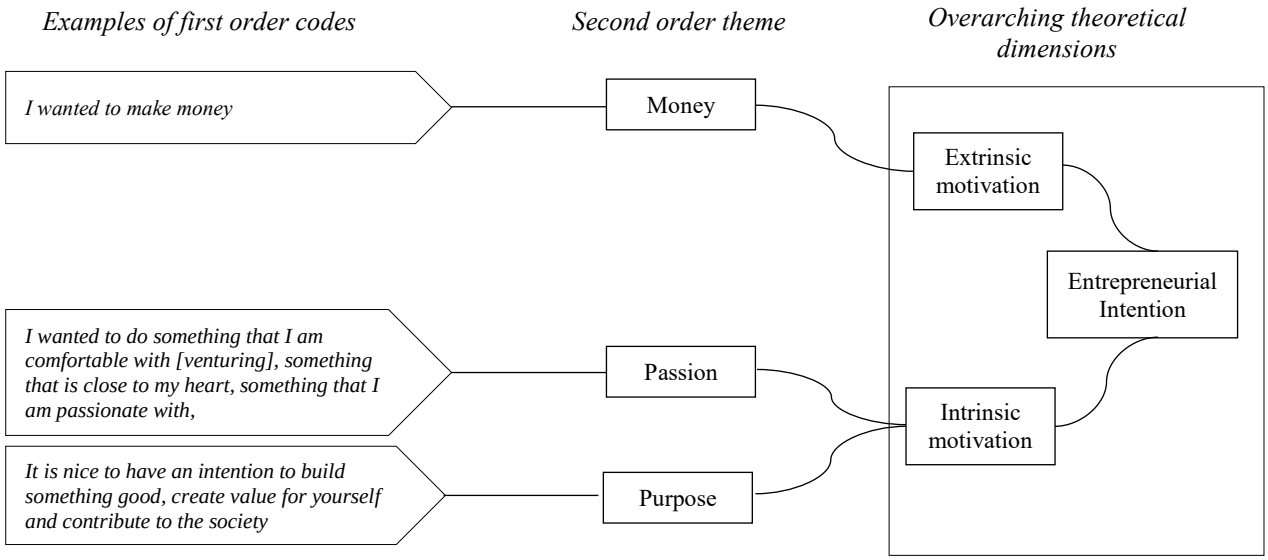
The analysis of the data suggested three main overarching theoretical dimensions around the entrepreneurial action process: entrepreneurial intention, resourcing (bricolage and resource assembly) and community vitality. Entrepreneurial intention and resourcing were pertinent to the pre-launch phases of the venture and community vitality was pertinent to the post-launch phase. According to the data analysis, there were two community types – family and social. Family (i.e., close community) refers to the group that the entrepreneur is surrounded by consisting of parents, spouse, and children. Social (i.e., distant community) is any member who is outside the family unit, such as relatives, friends, colleagues, peers, etc.

Data analysis revealed that these two community types interact with pre-launch phases enabling and constraining the actions of the entrepreneurs. These interactions showed community influence on entrepreneurial actions. During the post-launch phase (i.e., community vitality) communities are impacted by the actions of the entrepreneur and this action is informed by the compassionate dimension of Buddhism.

According to the data, pre-launch community interactions created tension for the participants during the venture creation process. Data analysis revealed that participants' religion – that of Buddhism assisted them to eliminate the said tensions. The Buddhist tenets of discernment and right livelihood were pertinent to the entrepreneurial intention. The Buddhist tenet of determination was pertinent to the resourcing phase. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 provide detailed analysis regarding entrepreneurial action and its interaction with community and Buddhism.

The three levels of data (i.e., first-order codes, second-order themes and overarching theoretical dimensions) are presented in the form of a "data structure" (see Figure 5 for a sample data structure) in the thesis. The sample data structure provides a visual aid to the reader showing how the researcher progressed from raw data to more meaningful themes. As Tracy (2010) explains, a graphical representation of how the researcher progressed from raw data to themes serves a key component to demonstrate rigour in qualitative research.

Figure 5: Sample data structure



Source: Research data

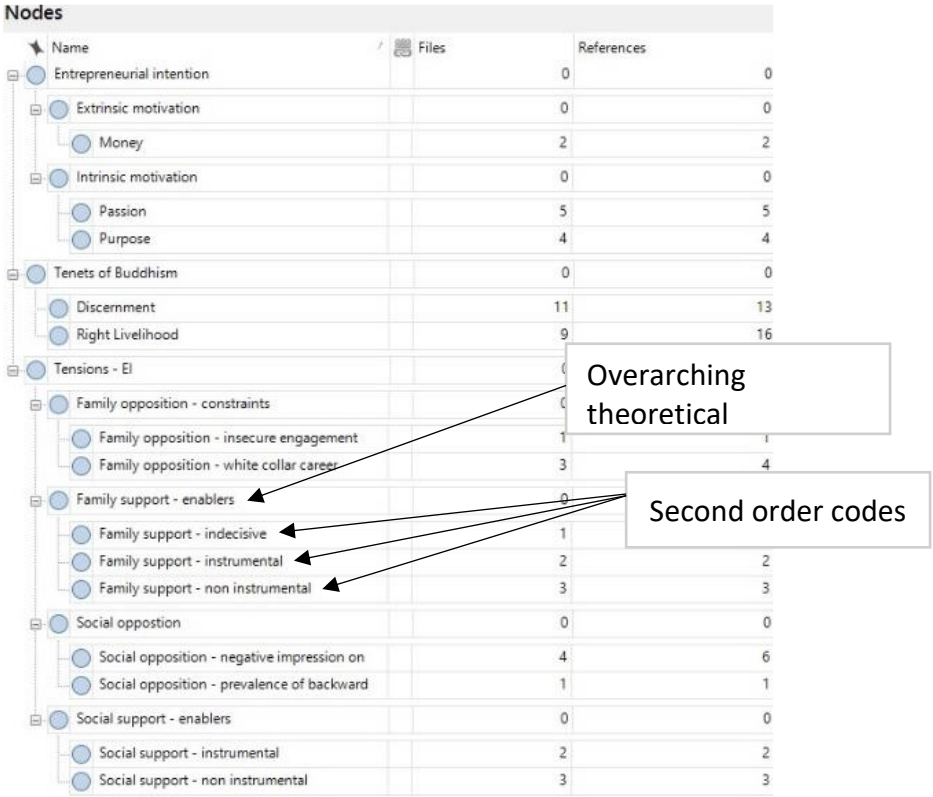
3.3.9 The Use of Computer Software

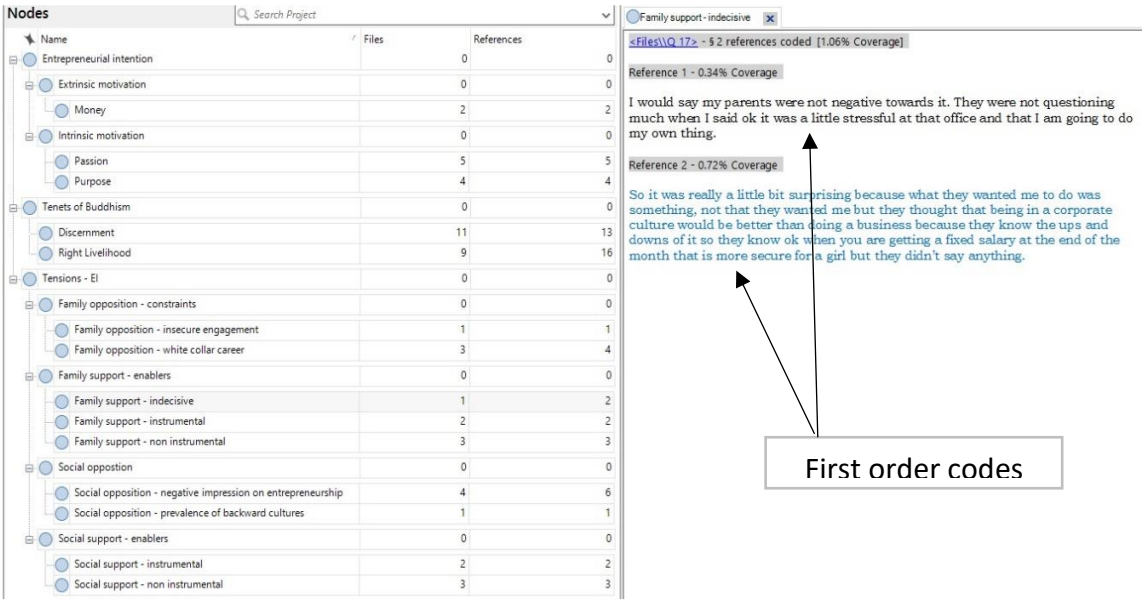
Based on personal preferences, some researchers choose manual techniques while others rely on computer software to analyse data due to convenience in coding, managing, and storing information. However, the use of computer software is not a requirement for qualitative data analysis as it is the researcher's mind and not the software that does the analysis (Patton, 2015). The use of software in this research *only* served the purpose of organising interview data.

The researcher used NVivo – 12 Pro to organise interview data. NVivo is specifically designed for qualitative research. It allows users to import and connect any type of data, including PDF files, word documents, audio files, pictures, spreadsheets and web pages. NVivo does not help with the critical analysis of data. It only serves to organise and highlight the connections between data. It is the researcher's responsibility to recognise themes and derive connections and meanings from the data.

The 24 participants in this study were identified by assigning each a letter (i.e., Participant A, B, C, etc.). The interview transcripts were then uploaded to NVivo – 12 Pro. Exploring each case transcription, emerging first order codes were highlighted by creating "nodes". Nodes are containers of themes that may include a parent node and child nodes. For example, the overarching theoretical dimension – *family support: enablers* comprises three child nodes *family support; indecisive, instrumental,* and *non- instrumental* (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6: NVivo 12 Pro – Node Structure





3.3.10 Research Quality Considerations

Measuring reliability and validity in qualitative research has been extensively debated in the literature (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). Some have argued that measuring reliability and validity only applies to quantitative research paradigms (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). At the same time, some suggest adopting new criteria to determine reliability and validity in qualitative research (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Regardless of the verification strategies for reliability and validity Morse et al. (2002) explain that "strategies for ensuring rigour must be built into the qualitative research process per se. These strategies include investigator responsiveness, methodological coherence, theoretical sampling and sample adequacy, an active analytic stance, and saturation" (p. 9).

It is beneficial to understand that research quality considerations differ along with the associated research paradigm (Riege, 2003). The paradigm of this research is critical realism. Research quality considerations relevant to critical realist inspired research include: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Riege, 2003).

Credibility (which parallels with internal validity) involves the approval of research findings by peers or research participants as realities are interpreted in multiple ways (Riege, 2003). According to Merriam (2009), credibility refers to how closely the research findings match with reality. Qualitative researchers are close to reality as they are considered to be directly involved with the data collection process such as observations and interviews. To enhance the credibility of research findings, the researcher discussed the research findings with the supervisors of the study. Furthermore, the researcher obtained a third-person view by disclosing the findings of the study to another PhD candidate at the Waikato Management School.

Transferability (which parallels with external validity/generalisability) refers to a study's ability to generalise its findings (Yin, 2014). This qualitative study aims at analytic generalisation in contrast to statistical generalisation. The sample in this study does not allow generalising its findings to entrepreneurial actions; but it may allow generalising its findings at a conceptual level (Jack, Dodd, & Anderson, 2008), and hence be transferable to theoretical situations and contexts. According to Yin (2014), the form of research question directly influences the transferability of qualitative research. He argues that "how" and "why" type of research questions can be beneficial for a study to contribute to analytic generalisation.

Another practice to enhance transferability of findings in qualitative research is the use of "rich descriptions", which is an extensively-used term in ethnographic research (Maxwell, 2012b). As Merriam (2009) writes, transferability refers to "a description of the setting and participants of the study, as well as a detailed description of the findings with adequate evidence presented in the form of quotes from participants interviews, field notes and documents" (p. 227). Embracing these suggestions in enhancing transferability, the researcher provided numerous participant quotes in the Findings chapters. Figures depicting the data

structures (First, second order themes and overarching theoretical dimensions) were also incorporated to enhance transferability. Furthermore, the researcher allocated a chapter to explaining the geographic context of the study.

Dependability (which parallels with reliability) refers to the extent to which a study's findings can be replicated. According to Merriam (2009), due to the changing nature of human behaviour, research in social science is difficult to replicate. Therefore, replication in the context of qualitative research is about "whether the results are consistent with the data collected" (p.221). In this way, dependability or consistency are more appropriate terms for qualitative research than reliability.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest a strategy to enhance dependability – that of adopting an audit trail. The audit trail allows readers to confirm the findings of a study by following a path that a researcher took to obtain the research findings. An audit trail entails data collection procedures, analysis techniques, and decisions made throughout the qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 2009). As Richards (2021) writes, a research that explicates proper methodological considerations to enhance the ability to convince the reader about how he/she obtained the information makes a "good" qualitative research. This chapter details the step-by-step process that the researcher undertook to arrive at the findings – that of the philosophical understanding of the researcher to explain entrepreneurial action, selection of the case study approach as the research strategy, ethical considerations, case study selection criteria, the choice of the semi-structured interview, data analysis techniques, and the use of computers.

Furthermore, the objective of dependability is to minimise errors and bias in a study. To minimise errors and bias, the study design was chosen to complement the research question. The researcher relied on consultation with supervisors and discussion with peers to ensure the results of this study are consistent, which improves dependability (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

With regard to data collection, the researcher firmly held the belief that valuable information will only be generated by building trust, credibility and confidence during the interview. To ensure the reliability of the interview data, the researcher took measures to not to impose his own personal values and beliefs through the interview questions that were raised. Hence, while thanking the study participant, the researcher introduced himself, his background, affiliations, the purpose of the research, the areas under investigation, and the usefulness of the interview to the academia to create an environment where the study participant felt comfortable sharing information.

Confirmability (which parallels with objectivity/construct validity) refers to suitable operational measures for the theoretical conceptions being researched in the study (Riege, 2003). According to Riege, confirmability is a widely used criterion in positivist research. Case studies are considered to be more subjective than other qualitative methodologies due to the researcher's close contact with the cases being examined. Hence, to enhance confirmability, researchers need to develop strategies to refrain from imposing subjective judgements during the research (Riege, 2003). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest creating a confirmability audit to enhance confirmability – that of retaining audiotapes, transcripts, photographs, etc which were widely used in this study. These strategies were adopted to enhance the confirmability criterion.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has explained the philosophical overview and research paradigm adopted that underpins the case study research methodology used in this study. The chapter provided an overview of the case study approach and why it is appropriate for this research. This study adopted multiple cases with holistic design. Ethical considerations, case selection criteria, and the choice of the semi-structured interview format were also detailed. The data analysis technique of inductive thematic analysis was introduced. Along with the use of computer

software in this study, strategies to ensure the quality of research – credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were described. These methodological considerations set the scene for the next chapter – a description of the context of the study.

Chapter Four

Geographic Context of Study: Sri Lanka

4.1 Introduction

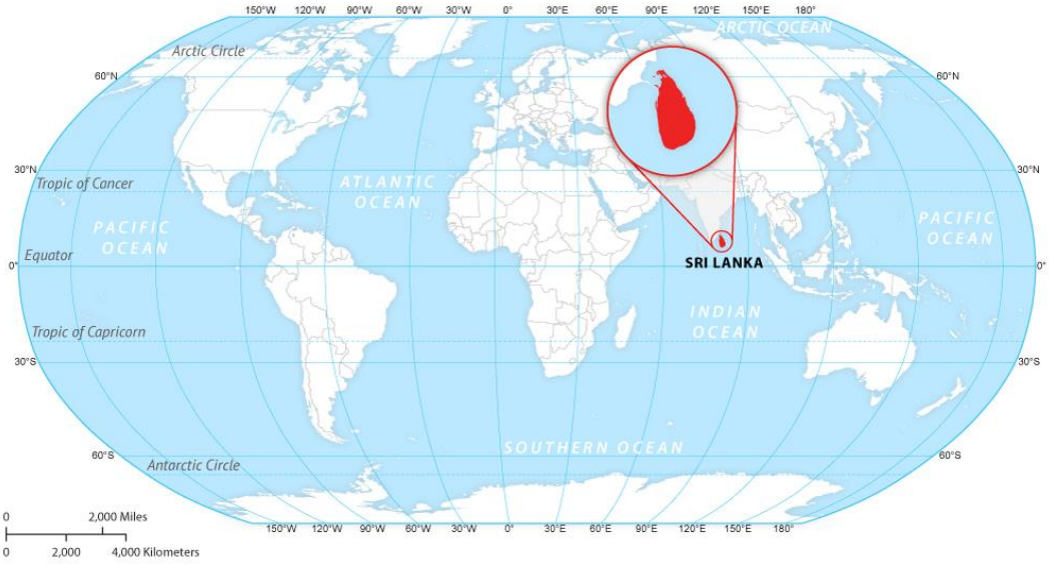
Chapters One, Two and Three provided the theoretical foundation and established the methodology for developing and addressing the overarching research question. This chapter introduces the geographic context of the study, Sri Lanka. This chapter has six sections. Section Two introduces Sri Lanka's geographic and demographic background. Section Three provides an overview of entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka. It details the distribution of micro, small, medium and large enterprises, and explains the sector's importance to the country and the issues it faces. Section Four explains the fundamentals of Buddhism and discusses the Theravada School of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Section Five introduces the socio-cultural background of Sri Lanka and explains the community structure in terms of the hierarchical structure, family, and gender roles. The chapter concludes with a summary.

4.2 Country Brief: Sri Lanka

4.2.1 Geographic Background

The geographic context of this study is Sri Lanka, officially known as the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Until 1972 the country was known as Ceylon. Sri Lanka is a small island situated near the southern tip of India (see Figure 7 below). Sri Lanka is also referred to as "the peal of Indian Ocean" due to the country's natural beauty. The country is famous for its history, spices, tea, tourism, hospitality, and Buddhism (Fernando, 2007).

Figure 7: Geographic location of Sri Lanka



Adapted from *Sri Lanka map*, by Maps of World. (2020). Retrieved from https://www.mapsofworld.com/sri-lanka/sri-lanka-location-map.html

The country has a total area of 65,610 km^2 with 2,905 km^2 of water and 62,705 km^2 of land (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020). The country's coastline is 1,340 km long. The climate of Sri Lanka includes tropical monsoons: the southwest monsoon (June to October) and northeast monsoon (December to March). The country's terrain is mostly low, with mountains in the south-central part. The highest point of the country is *Piduruthalagala*, which stands at 2,525 metres. The natural resources of the country include graphite, limestone, gems, clay, hydropower, and phosphates.

4.2.2 Demographic Background

According to the 2019 census of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, the population of the country was 21,803,000 giving a population density of 348/km^2. Growth of mid-year population was 0.6 percent, and 5,504,000 were aged or under 1,710,000 were aged 60 or over, leaving a working age (15-64) population of 14,589,000 in 2019.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recognizes Sri Lanka as a medium developed country based on level of education, average life expectancy, and standard of living. According to the UNDP report, Sri Lanka has recorded a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.780 positioning it at 71 out of 189 territories and countries (UNDP, 2019). This HDI value has put Sri Lanka in the high human development category. UNDP reports that Sri Lanka has recorded an increase of HDI from 0.625 to 0.780 from 1990 to 2018. This is an increase of HDI of 24.9 percent (UNDP, 2019). Furthermore, Sri Lanka's HDI rank of 71 is comparable to Pakistan and India, which have HDIs ranked 152 and 129 respectively.

Table 4: Population of Sri Lanka by Ethnicity and Religion

Indicator	Sri Lanka
Population ('000)	**21,803**
Ethnicity (%)	
Sinhalese	74.9
Sri Lankan Tamil	11.2
Indian Tamil	4.1
Sri Lankan Moor	9.3
Other	0.5
Religion	
Buddhist	70.1
Hindu	12.6
Islam	9.7
Christian and Roman Catholic	7.6
Other	0.0

Adapted from *Annual report of Sri Lanka*. Colombo: Sri Lanka: Central Bank Sri Lanka, by Central Bank of Sri Lanka. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/en/publications/economic-and-financial-reports/annual-reports/annual-report-2019

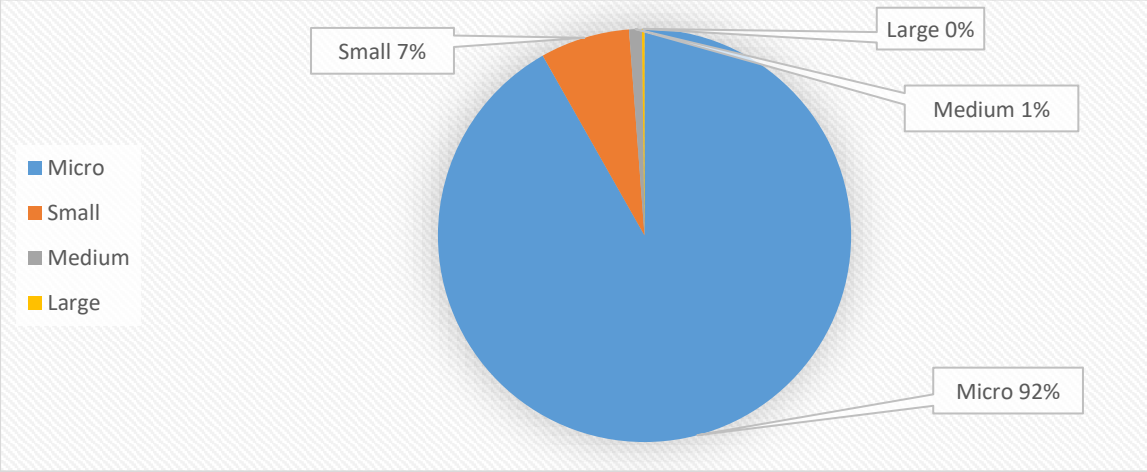
Sri Lanka is also known for its unique socio-cultural factors, such as its religious and ethnic composition. For example, according to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, of the estimated total population of 21,803,000, 70.1% are Buddhists (see Table 4 above). The remaining 30% is represented by Hindu, Islam, Christian and Roman Catholic and other religions.

4.3 Entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka

Entrepreneurship plays a vital part in the socio-economic aspects of Sri Lanka. The government of Sri Lanka has identified entrepreneurship as a key activity that should be developed to enhance living standards. The entrepreneurial sector comprises micro, small, medium, and large ventures in three economic sectors – industry and construction, trade, and services (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020). Most of these sectors are represented by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which account for over 90% of total enterprises and make a significant contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (see Figure 4.3 below). According to the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) Sri Lanka, the SME sector provides 1.017 million to approximately 2.25 million people (Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 2016).

In Sri Lanka, there is no one accepted definition for enterprises. They are defined in a variety of ways using different parameters such as the amount of capital invested, number of persons employed, turnover, nature of the business etc. For example, the Industrial Development Board (IDB) defines small industry using the amount of capital invested. The IDB identifies an entity whose capital invested in plant and machinery does not exceed 4 million Sri Lankan Rupees (NZD 32,000), and the total number of persons employed does not exceed 50, as a small enterprise (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2019). The World Bank classifies enterprises based on number of persons employed: entities with less than 49 persons employed are small; those with 50-99 persons employed are medium-sized; and those with more than 100 persons employed considered large enterprises.

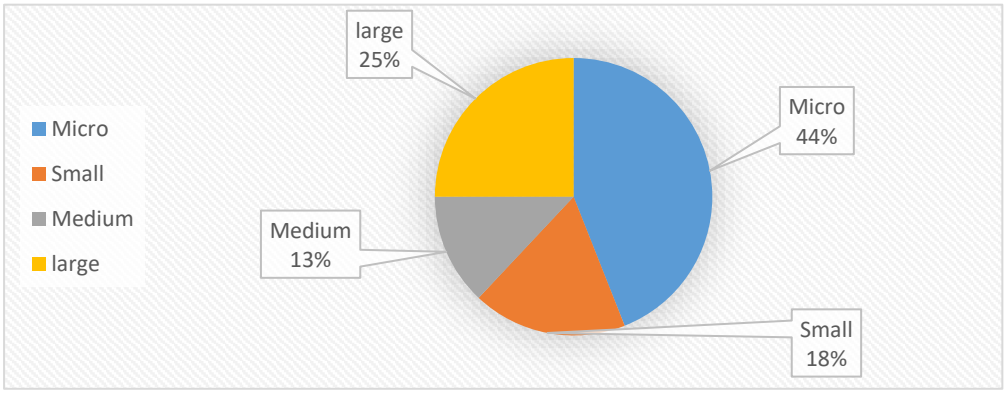
Figure 8: Distribution of establishments



Adapted from; *The Impact of COVID19 on the MSME Sector in Sri Lanka*. Colombo: Sri Lanka: United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, by Gunawardana, D. P. (2020), Retrieved from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26277Report_The_Impact_of_COVID19_to_MSME_sector_in_Sri_Lanka.pdf.

In relation to the distribution of employment, micro, small, and medium enterprises account for 75% of those employed in the non-agricultural economic sector and large enterprises account for 25%. (see Figure 9 below).

Figure 9: Distribution of Employment



Adapted from; *The Impact of COVID19 on the MSME Sector in Sri Lanka*. Colombo: Sri Lanka: United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, by Gunawardana, D. P. (2020), Retrieved from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26277Report_The_Impact_of_COVID19_to_MSME_sector_in_Sri_Lanka.pdf.

These statistics indicate that micro, small, and medium enterprises represent the majority of enterprises in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government places an emphasis on developing this sector due to its multi-faceted merits. *First*, micro, small, and medium enterprises have an excellent potential to generate socio-economic benefits to the country with a relatively low level of investment. *Second*, the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises help to promote balanced regional development. For example, the government initiates a number of programmes to eradicate poverty in Sri Lanka. The promotion of micro, small, and medium enterprises forms a vital role in poverty alleviation and regional development initiatives implemented by the Sri Lankan government. *Third*, these enterprises serve as a platform to nurture entrepreneurial talents of youth. Most new employees of micro, small, and medium enterprises are entry-level staff, and these enterprises serve as a platform to enhance their training capacities. *Fourth*, micro, small, and medium enterprises play a supportive role to larger companies through sub-contracting. Through formal and informal links, micro, small, and medium enterprises provide a foundation for the growth of the industrial sector in Sri Lanka.

The expansion and growth of entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka is constrained by a number of forces such as factor and product markets, as well as the regulatory system. These issues can be categorised as physical infrastructure, access to finance, information, advice, and business development services, etc. High interest rates charged and collateral required by the lending institutions are the most frequently cited constraints affecting small and medium enterprises in Sri Lanka. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce (2016) has implemented a policy framework to foster entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka and to assist ventures to overcome the above constraints. The policy framework is aligned with the vision to create dynamic, globally competitive, eco-friendly, sustainable small and medium enterprises that contribute to Sri Lanka's economic development (Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 2016).

4.4 Buddhism

Buddhism is a non-theistic religion and a philosophy that originated from the teachings of Buddha. Before attaining Buddhahood, he was known as Prince Siddhartha Gautama and was born to King Suddhodana and Queen Mahamaya in Lumbini (present-day Nepal) (Marques, 2015). Siddhartha experienced a luxurious life, without being exposed to any form of suffering or hardship. He renounced all material possessions and status and started to search for liberation after encountering a sick person, an older adult, a corpse, and a man in yellow robe (Saddhatissa, 2003). For six years, Siddhartha sought salvation by exposing himself to extreme physical suffering. However, he realised that extremism does not lead to liberation and started to practice the "middle path" (Saddhatissa, 2003).

After the death of Lord Buddha 2550 years ago, Buddhism began to spread across Asia, including Sri Lanka. Further details regarding Buddhism in Sri Lanka are explained in the next section. This section explains the teachings of Buddhism.

Buddhism has a paradigmatic concern regarding human development, especially in a sustainable manner (Saengsakorn, 2018). As Rāhula (2006) writes, the heart of Buddhism lies in the Four Noble Truths which the lord Buddha expounded in his first sermon[7] to the adherents.

The first Nobel Truth, *dukkha* includes more profound ideas such as "imperfection, impermanence, emptiness, and insubstantiality" (Rāhula, 2006, p. 17). Rāhula (2006) adds that dukkha is mostly interpreted by scholars as suffering. Interpreting *dukkha* as suffering is a misleading translation which results in a belief that Buddhism has a pessimistic world view. Rāhula (2006) accepts the fact that the Pali word *dukkha* in ordinary usage means suffering,

[7] Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta

sorrow, pain, or misery as opposed to the word *sukha* which means happiness, comfort or ease. But the term *dukkha*, as the First Noble Truth, which signifies the Buddha's view of the world, has a deeper meaning, and connotes deeper ideas mentioned above – that of "imperfection, impermanence, emptiness, and insubstantiality".

The second Nobel Truth includes the origin or arising of *dukkha* (*Dukkhasamudaya-ariyasacca*). Buddhism explains that thirst, desire, craving, and greed gives rise to all forms of suffering and the continuity of beings (Rāhula, 2006). The third Nobel Truth – *nirodha* - discusses liberation, emancipation, freedom from suffering, from the continuity of *dukkha*. This is known as the Nobel Truth of the Cessation of *dukkha, which is Nibbāna* (Rāhula, 2006). The Fourth Nobel Truth refers to the Way leading to the Cessation of Dukkha – *Magga (the path)*. This is known as the "middle path", as it avoids two extremes: one extreme being the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, which is common, low, unprofitable and the way of ordinary people; and the other extreme being the search for happiness through self-mortification in different forms of asceticism, which is painful, unworthy, and unprofitable (Rāhula, 2006).

Having himself tried these two extremes, and having realised them to be useless, the Buddha realised through personal experience, the Middle Path, which leads to attain *Nibbāna* (Rāhula, 2006). This Middle Path is referred to as the Nobel Eightfold Path of Buddhism (*Ariya-Atthangika-Magga*) because it comprises eight factors: namely,

1. Right understanding (*sammā-diṭṭhi*)
2. Right Thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*)
3. Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*)
4. Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*)
5. Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*)
6. Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*)

7. Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*)
8. Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*)

The Nobel Eightfold Path is categorised into three main sections – that of ethical conduct (Sīla), mental discipline (Samādhi), and wisdom (Paññā) (Rāhula, 2006) (see Table 5 below). Ethical conduct is based on the ideas of universal love and compassion for all living beings. The three factors – that of right speech, right action, and right livelihood constitute ethical conduct (Rāhula, 2006). Ethical conduct promotes a harmonious and happy life for both the individual and society. Mental discipline is made up of the factors of right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration (Rāhula, 2006). Mental discipline promotes an understanding of sensations and feelings. In this regard, one should be aware of all the forms of sensations and feelings, pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, and of how they occur and disappear within oneself. Regarding the activities of the mind, one should be aware whether his/her mind is hateful or not, lustful or not, distracted or concentrated, etc. In this way, one can be aware of the mind, and of how thoughts arise and disappear within oneself. The remaining two factors – that of right thought and right understanding constitute the wisdom.

Right speech, being the first factor of ethical conduct, refers to abstention from: (1) telling lies, (2) backbiting talk that causes hatred, enmity, disharmony and disunity among people, (3) rude, impolite, abusive, and malicious language, and (4) idle, foolish babble and gossip (Rāhula, 2006). When one refrains from these forms of wrong speech one naturally has to speak the truth, and has to use words that are benevolent, friendly, gentle and meaningful. Rāhula (2006) expresses that one should not speak carelessly: speech should be at the right place and time. If one cannot say something useful, one should keep “noble silence”.

Right action, being the second factor of ethical conduct, aims at promoting honourable, moral, and peaceful conduct (Rāhula, 2006). Right action refers to the idea that people should

refrain from: destroying life, dishonest dealings, stealing, and illegitimate sexual intercourse, and that individuals should help others to lead an honourable and peaceful life (Rāhula, 2006).

Right livelihood, is the last factor of ethical conduct. It means that individuals should refrain from making a living through a profession that causes harm to others, such as: trading in arms, lethal weapons, or intoxicating drinks; killing animals, cheating, using poisons etc (Rāhula, 2006). An individual should make his/her own living through a profession which is honourable, innocent, and which does not harm others. The Nobel Eightfold Path explains that these three factors – that of right speech, right action, and right livelihood constitute ethical conduct aimed at promoting a harmonious and peaceful life for both individuals and society.

Right effort, being the first factor of mental discipline, means the energetic will to: (1) prevent unwholesome states of mind from arising, and (2) get rid of such unwholesome states of mind that have already arisen within a person, and also (3) produce wholesome states of mind not yet arisen (Rāhula, 2006). Right mindfulness, being the second factor of the mental discipline means being diligent about one's body, mind sensations and ideas, thoughts, things, and conceptions (Rāhula, 2006). The last factor of mental discipline is right concentration. Right concentration leads to *dhyāna* (i.e., four tranquilities). In the first stage of *dhyāna,* unwholesome thoughts and passionate desires such as ill-will, lust, worry, restlessness, feelings of joy, and happiness are maintained. In the second stage of *dhyāna* all intellectual activities are suppressed, tranquillity and "one-pointedness" of mind developed. The feeling of happiness and equanimity are still retained. In the third stage of *dhyāna* the feeling of happiness vanishes, and equanimity arises. Finally, at the fourth stage one will lose both positive and negative sensations such as joy and grief. This is stage where one feels a "pure equanimity and awareness" (Rāhula, 2006, p. 49).

Lastly, wisdom is constituted by right thought and right understanding. Right thought, being the first factor of wisdom, refers to the thoughts of selfless detachment, thoughts of non-violence, and love, which are extended to all beings (Rāhula, 2006). Right understanding, being the second factor of wisdom, means the understanding of things as they are. This form of understanding is the highest wisdom which realises the "Ultimate Reality" (Rāhula, 2006, p. 49). Buddhism suggests two forms of understanding. First, the general understanding one could attain through knowledge and accumulated memory. This is known as "knowing accordingly" (*anubodha*) (Rāhula, 2006, p. 49). Second, real deep understanding known as "penetration" (pativedha) (Rāhula, 2006, p. 49). Real understanding entails seeing things in their true nature, without naming or labelling them. This mind is only attained through meditation and this is regarded as a state of mind free from all impurities.

Table 5: The Nobel Eightfold Path of Buddhism

Section	Factors of the Nobel Eightfold Path	Aspects of each factor of the Nobel Eightfold Path
Ethical Conduct (Sīla)	Right Speech	Abstention from: false speech (or lies), malicious (abusive) speech, hateful speech, and idle (or gossip) speech.
	Right Action	Abstention from: stealing, destroying life, sexual misconduct, dishonest dealings, and promote honourable and peaceful life.
	Right Livelihood	Refraining from: occupations that harm others: trading in lethal weapons and arms, intoxicating drinks, poisons, cheating and killing animals.
Mental discipline (Samādhi)	Right Effort	Prevent unwholesome states of mind from arising, eliminate unwholesome states of mind already arisen, generate wholesome states of mind, and further develop already arisen wholesome states of mind.
	Right Mindfulness	Being aware of one's body, mind, sensations and ideas, thoughts, things and conceptions.
	Right Concentration	Four Tranquilities ('*dhyāna'*)
Wisdom (Paññā)	Right Understanding	Received wisdom, intellectual wisdom, and experiential wisdom.
	Right Thought	Nonattachment, harmlessness, and loving-kindness.

Adapted from *What the Buddha taught* (9th ed.). By Rāhula, W. (2006). Dehiwala, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Cultural Centre.

4.4.1 Buddhism in Sri Lanka

Buddhism was first introduced to Sri Lanka by a mission sent from India during the reign of the Indian Emperor Ashoka in the third century B.C.E. The mission was led by his son, Mahinda Thero. The Emperor Ashoka had a close friendship with the King Dewanampiya Thissa who was the king of Sri Lanka at that time. Since then, with the sponsorship of the monarch, Buddhism has been the basis of Sri Lankan culture. A number of kings in Sri Lanka's history worked to protect Buddhism. For example, the Dutugemunu-Elara war (second century B.C.E.) was considered the first conflict in Sri Lanka. The Sinhala King Dutugemunu fought against King Elara "to protect Buddhism" (Spencer, 1990). *The Mahavansa* (the written history of Sri Lanka) explains that after winning, King Dutugemunu built a temple in the name of his opponent, King Elara. King Dutugemunu's actions depict respect for his opponent, which may have influenced by Buddhist teachings.

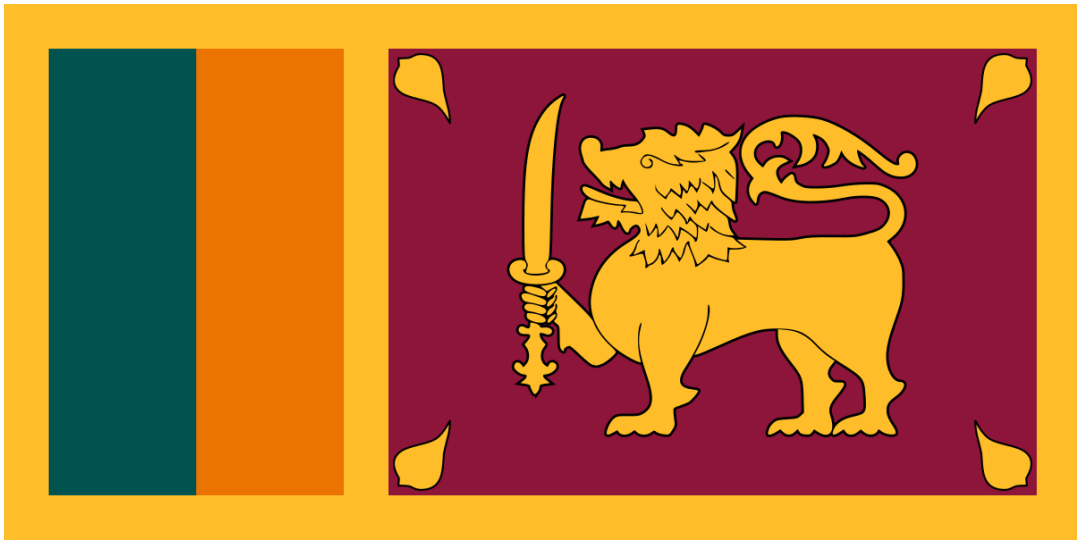
As Holt (2003) writes, "Sri Lanka is home to the world's oldest continuing Buddhist civilisation" (p. 795). Since the third century B.C.E, Buddhism has remained the main religion in Sri Lanka and is practiced by 70% of the population. As mentioned above (see Table 4) most Buddhists are from the Sinhalese ethnic group which is the largest ethnic group in Sri Lanka (approximately 75% of the population). Sri Lanka is considered a multicultural and religiously diverse society, albeit one in which Buddhism is prominent.

The prevalent form of Buddhism found in Sri Lanka is the Theravada School, which is also the predominant Buddhist tradition in Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand (Keyes, 2016). The essential characteristics of Theravada Buddhism are the use of Pali as the language, the recognition of Pali Canons as the textual authority, and the main role given to the monks who follow *vinaya* (i.e., the monastic rule) (Crosby, 2003).

Theravada Buddhism is distinguished from Mahayana Buddhism – the latter is prevalent in East and North Asia. Theravada Buddhism is based on the early form of Buddhism while Mahayana Buddhism is a later form of Buddhism. As Berkwitz (2003) writes, "Sri Lankan Buddhists continue to regard themselves as adherents to "pure Buddhism", a form of the religion that has existed more or less unchanged from the time that the Buddha and his immediate disciples spread the Dhamma many centuries ago" (Berkwitz, 2003, p. 57). Theravada Buddhism manifests in ideological form in economic and political systems, including institutional frameworks (Berkwitz, 2003). These manifestations of Buddhism cause Sri Lankans to believe that their culture has been primarily shaped by Buddhism, i.e. an "inseparable bond between Buddhism and the nation" (Berkwitz 2006, p. 53). Values systems and social norms manifested in local culture and communities contribute to Sri Lankans perceiving Buddhism as a philosophy and a way of life (Bond, 2004). Sri Lanka is recognised as one of the most religious countries in the world and Buddhism influences various aspects of life (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1990).

According to Article 9 of its 1978 Constitution, Sri Lanka is legally bound to protect and foster the foremost religion in Sri Lanka – that of Buddhism. Conscience and religion, and freedom of thought are observed by Articles 10 and 14 (Parliament Secretariat, 2015). The characteristics of Buddhism are also depicted in the national flag of Sri Lanka (see Figure 10 below). The lion's tail signifies the Nobel Eightfold Path of Buddhism, the hair of the lion represents religious observance (such as meditation and wisdom), and the four Bodhi tree leaves denote the divine states.

Figure 10: The national flag of Sri Lanka



Adapted from *Flag of Sri Lanka*, Wikimedia Commons. (2021). Retrieved from https://www.mapsofworld.com/sri-lanka/sri-lanka-location-map.html

4.5 Socio-cultural Environment in Sri Lanka

4.5.1 Hierarchical System

The Sri Lankan social structure is considered hierarchical. Divisions in the hierarchical system are related to the prevalent social classes in society. Social classes are represented by the caste system which is referred to as the “Kula” structure. The social community into which an individual is born is determined by the caste system. Ideas regarding purity serve as a rationale to divide society into different groups. One’s cast is therefore determined by the perceived impurity of the hierarchy of the cast. In addition, the Sri Lankan caste system is based on occupations and place in the federal order (Ryan, 1953).

Traditionally, the upper class of Sri Lanka consisted of senior executives, serving government ministers, businessman and industrialists. The upper class is considered the wealthiest in Sri Lanka. Some members have inherited money and position while others achieve money and position by their own efforts. The upper middle class consists of educated

professionals and bourgeoisie, who have been educated at private or public schools and foreign or local universities. Traditional jobs in the upper middle class include doctors, lawyers, academics, military officers, and managers. The lower middle class consists of white-collar employees living in less urban suburbs. This class is considered the largest within Sri Lankan communities. The lowest in the hierarchy are the poor. These people are born into low-income households. The poor are mostly dependent on government benefits and reside in shanty towns or slums.

Beliefs about the caste system, and the designated occupations that one should hold relative to his/her place in the hierarchy do not prevail in society at present. Mostly, the young generation tend not to consider the caste system when interacting with people. Members of different castes can interact freely without feeling discomfort about caste inequalities.

4.5.2 The Family

For most Sri Lankans life revolves around the family. Sri Lankan society is predominantly characterised by collective communities and the family is the first community a person becomes a member of at his/her birth (Niles, 1998). In collective communities' individuals emphasise a sense of self stemming from group membership (Hofstede, 2001); the community prioritises harmony, solidarity, and self-sacrifice in support of generally accepted values and goals within one's in-group (Medcof & Wang, 2017). Sri Lankan families revolve around a collective concern for the family, and respect and service to elders and to the country (Niles, 1998). These concerns suggest that the acts of an individual can impact the perception of the whole family by others in the community.

An individual's most essential relationships are often within the nuclear family. However, relationships and connections with one's extended families are also highly valued. Usually, two or three generations live together, with the male side connecting the relations.

Mothers tend to hold a significant amount of household authority and respect and the father is usually considered the patriarch. Within the family unit, age is considered a source of hierarchy and elders are cared for and respected.

4.5.3 Gender roles

Traditionally, women are responsible for the domestic sphere while men focus on income opportunities. However, women and men participate in the workforce quite significantly at present. For example, the World Bank identified that in 2020, 35 percent of females over 15 years of age in Sri Lanka participate in the labour force (The World Bank, 2020). Nowadays there is a significant increase in women participating in the labour force, but their contribution is not distributed evenly. There is a significant increase in female participation in professions such as clothing production, tea picking, teaching, and catering. Women have also held high positions. For example, Sri Lanka elected the world's first woman prime minister, Sirimavo Bandaranayake (Seneviratne, 1975).

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the geographic, demographic, and socio-cultural context of this study. The geographic position of Sri Lanka at the southern tip of India places the country at the nexus of the world, connecting the East, the Pacific, Europe, and America. Sri Lanka is strongly influenced by Buddhism and has a hierarchical community structure, both of which may have implications for entrepreneurship.

Addressing the overarching question of *"How do community and Buddhism interact with entrepreneurial action?"* this thesis presents the themes of Entrepreneurial Intention, Resourcing, and Community Vitality. Chapter Five is the first of the three data chapters. It will

explain the research findings relating to the theme of Entrepreneurial Intention – the first phase of entrepreneurial action.

Chapter Five

Entrepreneurial Intention

5.1 Introduction

Analysis of the data revealed three themes of entrepreneurial actions: intention to start a new venture, resourcing, and community vitality. These three themes are phases of an emergent venture. Entrepreneurial intention and resourcing are pertinent to the pre-launch phases and community vitality is pertinent to the post-launch phase. This chapter presents the findings related to the first phase of entrepreneurial action – that of entrepreneurial intention – and its interaction with community and Buddhism. This intention phase of the venture equates to the gestation stage, when the entrepreneurial ideas and intentions are being generated.

This chapter is divided into five sections. Following the introduction, the second section presents the findings on entrepreneurial intention and its motivations. Findings revealed entrepreneurial intention as one's inclination to form an entrepreneurial venture. There are three underlying motivations of entrepreneurial intention. *First*, making money through forming an entrepreneurial venture. *Second*, engaging in entrepreneurship as a passionate activity. *Third*, serving society through entrepreneurship as a higher purpose. In this way, entrepreneurial intention is formed by the individual's attitude towards entrepreneurship, found through extrinsic (money) and intrinsic (passion and purpose) motivations.

The third section focuses on the nexus between community and entrepreneurial intention. Analysis of data revealed two type of communities – that of close (i.e., family) and distant (i.e., social) communities. The two types of community interaction – enabling and constraining – created tension for the participants as they carried out their entrepreneurial intentions. Tension occurred due to the influence of culture, local norms, beliefs, perceptions, and history of close

(family) and distant (social) communities in ways that were both helpful (enablers) and detrimental (constraints) for entrepreneurial intention. Family and social support exhibited instrumental (tangible assistance) or non-instrumental (intangible assistance) dimensions. In addition, family assistance also demonstrated an indecisive dimension (assistance that is neither instrumental nor non-instrumental). Family and social opposition occurred due to unfavourable social norms related to entrepreneurship such as: the prevalence of less developed cultures, a negative impression of entrepreneurship, a preference for white-collar careers over entrepreneurial aspirations, and a perception of entrepreneurship as an insecure form of employment.

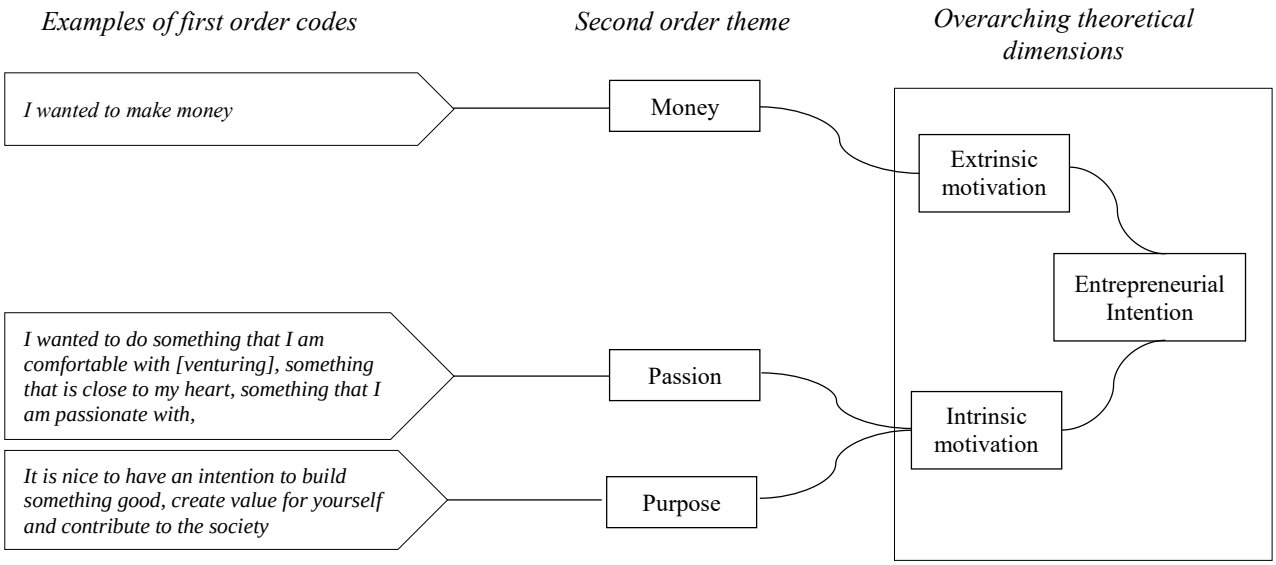
Section Four focuses on the participants' religious upbringing to explain the role of Buddhism in managing tension. Findings indicated that the quality of being discerning – discernment – was helpful as it is about believing what is true in the light of one's awareness. The Buddhist tenet of Right Livelihood guided participants to shape their entrepreneurial intention. Some participants ensured right livelihood in their entrepreneurial intentions by engaging in ethical business. In contrast, others refrained engaging in activities such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, cheating etc. The chapter concludes with Section Five which summarises the nexus between entrepreneurial intention, community, and Buddhism in an integrative framework.

5.2 Motivations of Entrepreneurial Intention

According to the participant commentaries, entrepreneurial intention captured three facets (see Figure 11 below). *First*, entrepreneurial intention was the motivation to make money through forming a venture. For these participants, making money is intricately tied up with self-determination and risk-taking – highlighting the motivations underlying entrepreneurial intentions. *Second*, entrepreneurial intention was a passion for

entrepreneurship. For these participants, owning a venture was the elemental motivation for entrepreneurial intention. *Third,* entrepreneurial intention fulfilled an objective to serve society through entrepreneurship. For these participants doing something that benefited the community beyond individual self-interest captures the motivation underlying their entrepreneurial intentions. Findings further revealed that entrepreneurial intention is formed by the individual's attitude towards entrepreneurship, found through extrinsic (money) and intrinsic (passion and purpose) motivations.

Figure 11: Data structure of Entrepreneurial Intention



Source: Research data

5.2.1 Money

The first motivation that emerged from the data was making money. The chairman of a business conglomerate expressed that he always wanted to make money and have his own business. As he said:

I never had intentions, to be honest, to go to university or anything, I wanted to make money. I always had an idea of doing something on my own [form a venture]. This has been the symbol of success of my life. (Participant L)

Making money is often a primary determinant of entrepreneurial intention. The example above conveys the fact that the participant chose entrepreneurship as an attractive career alternative. He perceived making money as more appealing than going to university and perhaps following a conventional career path. This is similar to the commentary of the bag producer who realised that entrepreneurship was a relatively attractive career path compared to being stuck in a corporate position in a company. His commentary is further evidence that he had a desire to take risks. Therefore, he capitalised on his entrepreneurial intention. As he said:

I always had the idea of entrepreneurship and I always wanted to launch a brand of my own. In my company, according to the hierarchy, I was the next in line to be trained, so, I had to take a bold decision whether I was going to remain with the company or launch something on my own. So, at the age of 40 I had to make a decision because if I accepted the promotion that was offered to me I would be stuck in the same position for another five to six years and with the responsibilities and perks that come with the promotion. I would not be able to retrace my steps. So, at that point I thought that if I did not make a decision, one day I will regret not taking risks in my life. So, I capitalised on my entrepreneurial intention and formed this venture. (Participant U)

5.2.2 Passion

The second motivation that emerged from the data was a sense of passion. As the chairman of a real estate development company said:

I wanted to do something that I am comfortable with [venturing], something that is close to my heart, something that I am passionate about, so that was what I wanted to do. (Participant E)

The owner of the water-care company perceived venturing as doing something on his own. He stated:

I decided that, in order to be successful I need to do something on my own [form a venture] and this thought kept working in my mind. (Participant R)

The T-shirt manufacturer recalled that his entrepreneurial intention to form his own venture was instilled during his school days. In addition, "novelty" was a factor in his entrepreneurial intention. As he stated:

From my school days I always had this idea of doing something on my own and it was my desire to own a business. Whatever motivated me was that I should do something novel. (Participant A)

Also, the chairman of a business conglomerate explained his entrepreneurial intention as a desire to get involved with a business since his school days. His father's business was a significant influence on his entrepreneurial intention.

I had a great liking to get involved in the business since that time [his schooldays]. Actually, I started working in my father's business as a clerk. Next, I became a cashier and then I became the Chief Clerk. I rose up that way. (Participant I)

Similarly, according to the timber mill owner, owning a timber mill of his own has been an objective since his school days. A particular timber mill and its owner's encouragement inspired him to establish his own timber mill.

There was a timber mill in close proximity to my school. It was situated about two bus stops from my school. On my return journey home I walked to that stop to take the bus. While waiting for the bus I used to watch what happened at the mill. Actually, a worker there told me not to loiter and to go home directly after school. At that point I thought to myself that one day I will have a mill of my own. The worker asked me if I had an intention of owning a mill someday and I must say that it was on that day that I vowed to have a mill of my own. I therefore think of him with much gratitude for giving me that courage with his words. (Participant V)

5.2.3 Purpose

The third motivation that emerged from the data was purpose – doing something that benefited the community. The commentary of the refrigerator manufacturer shows that his brother passed away because of food poisoning. He wanted to do something to prevent others from suffering from food poisoning. This incident encouraged him to pursue a venturing intention by producing refrigerators. As he recalled:

I had an elder brother who died from food poisoning when he was young. My mother used to constantly tell me about his death. I sort of got converted after hearing this and thought to myself that I should not let this happen to someone else. It was not a vivid feeling but a fleeting thing. I did not think about it in a big way and think that I must do something about it but those words "food poisoning" seemed to be reverberating in my mind and as refrigeration was also connected to food I decided to manufacture something to resolve that problem. (Participant O)

Benefiting society is also evident in the commentary of the chairman of a business conglomerate. He mentioned his aspirations of creating value for himself and society.

Explaining the societal contribution in terms of the business' scope, revenue, and employees he said:

> *It is nice to have an intention to build something good, to create value for yourself and contribute to society. We have a turnover of about half a billion rupees and I have ten thousand employees. We are the largest hospital operator, we are into fashion, and in retail industries as well. In this way, we serve society.* (Participant L)

The cane furniture manufacturer described his intention of benefiting society by creating an environmentally friendly product.

> *My passion was to develop a concept where all products are made out of environmentally friendly and recycled materials. This is in keeping with the global trend. I do not use any type of plastic or synthetic wood. Even my cushions are made out of handloomed rather than artificial fabric. Most of the fabric that is imported from China is artificial fabric and is not suited to our tropical climate.* (Participant N)

The chairman of a high-tech company, who was previously a lawyer, explained how he felt about his previous job and his intention to help society through entrepreneurship. He understood entrepreneurship as a means to contribute to GDP and thus capitalised on his entrepreneurial intention. As he explained:

> *When you are a lawyer, you have to do things against your conscience. I used to think that going to court and getting an income does not benefit society or the country in any way. What I was doing was draining someone's pocket, sometimes a person who is less fortunate than myself. I then started to wonder what was my contribution to the country's GDP? I got a scholarship and went to Japan and while I was there, I saw that product and decided to manufacture it in Sri Lanka.* (Participant F)

5.2.4 Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivations of Entrepreneurial Intention

These three facets of entrepreneurial intention suggest that it is formed by the individual's attitude toward entrepreneurship, found through extrinsic (money) and intrinsic motivations (passion and purpose). Extrinsically motivated entrepreneurial intentions include an expectation of separable outcomes such as pride, making money, or even avoiding unemployment. For example, the chairman of a business conglomerate claimed his intention was to make money by owning a venture (Participant L).

Intrinsically motivated entrepreneurial intentions include personal interests that drive an individual to achieve a particular outcome, such as a need for achievement, reciprocity, self-determination, and the like. These are personal needs and desires behind forming a venture. For example, the chairman of a real estate development company understood venturing as comfortable, close to his heart and an activity he was passionate about (Participant E). The chairman of a business conglomerate expressed his purpose of creating value for himself and society (Participant L).

In summary, the data revealed three facets of entrepreneurial intention. *First*, some were inclined to earn money by forming an entrepreneurial venture. For these participants, making money is intricately tied up with self-determination and risk-taking, highlighting the motivations underlying entrepreneurial intentions. They valued entrepreneurship over corporate employment (Participants L and U). For instance, the chairman of a business conglomerate stated that venturing was his prime interest. His values more strongly aligned with getting practical experience by entering into entrepreneurship rather than going to university (Participant L).

Second, others entered into entrepreneurship due to their strong passion for the business ownership (Participants E, R, A, V and I). For these participants, owning a venture was the

primary motivation of entrepreneurial intention. For example, the chairman of a real estate development company stated his interest in engaging with an activity he was comfortable with, close to his heart, and passionate about (Participant E).

Third, four participants entered entrepreneurship to fulfil their purpose of serving society (Participants O, L, N and F). They intended to do something that benefited the community beyond their individual self-interest. For instance, the chairman of a business conglomerate expressed his purpose as creating value for himself and contributing to society (Participant L).

The findings further supported that the three facets of entrepreneurial intention are formed by the individual's attitude toward entrepreneurship and found through extrinsic (money) and intrinsic motivations (passion and purpose). Extrinsically motivated entrepreneurial intentions include an expectation of separable outcomes such as making money, or even avoiding unemployment. The chairman of a business conglomerate mentioned his intentions to make money by forming his own venture. (Participant L).

Intrinsically motivated entrepreneurial intentions include personal needs and desires to form a venture. Some had a desire to engage in entrepreneurship due to passion. The chairman of a real estate development company expressed his intention of engaging in something that he is passionate about (Participant E). Others had a desire to serve society through entrepreneurship. For example, the cane furniture manufacturer expressed his intention to benefit society by creating an environmentally friendly product.

5.3 Community Conduits and Entrepreneurial Intention

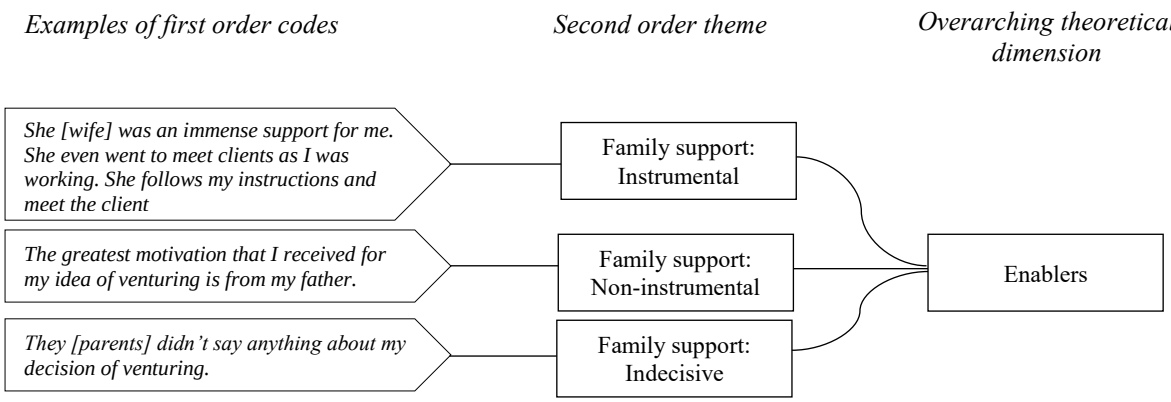
The community can shape an intention to create a venture. Culture, local norms, beliefs, perceptions, and history adopted by communities play both helpful (enablers) and detrimental

(constraints) roles. The participant's descriptions revealed two main influencers. *First*, the close community conduit ("family") is the group the entrepreneur is surrounded by, and comprises parents, spouse, and children. The family imposes perceptions, norms, and attitudes on entrepreneurial intention in two ways. Participants explained that their family either supported (Participants Q, U, P, and Y) or opposed (participant A, B, R, and X) their entrepreneurial intention.

Second, the distant community conduit ("social") is any member who is outside the family unit, such as relatives, friends, colleagues, peers, etc. This community can impose social norms, beliefs, and perceptions on entrepreneurial intention in two ways. Participant descriptions showed that their social communities either supported (Participants P, Q, U, R, and X) or opposed (Participants A, D, F, U, and Q) their entrepreneurial intention. The following two sections detail participant descriptions about their family support for or opposition to their entrepreneurial intention.

5.3.1 Family Support

Figure 12: Data Structure of Family Support



Source: Research Data

For some participants (Q, U, P, and Y) family is clearly a supportive force in enabling their entrepreneurial intention (see Figure 12 above). According to the jewellery maker, she had a sense of freedom in realising her entrepreneurial intention. She explained that her parents were not a hindrance.

> *I would say my parents were not negative towards it [the decision of quitting her job and starting her own venture]. They did not really question much when I said that I am going to do my own thing [forming her own venture].* (Participant Q)

However, she stated that her parents preferred their children to pursue careers in established companies, as they perceived such professions as comparatively stable. However, her parents did not comment on her decision. She said:

> *… they thought that being in a corporate culture would be better than doing a business because they know the ups and downs of venturing. They know when you are getting a fixed salary at the end of the month that is more secure for a girl because more than ninety percent of this industry [gem trading and mining] is male dominated. However, they didn't say anything about my decision.* (Participant Q)

She explained her husband's support and encouragement was a significant influence on her entrepreneurial intention. Her husband's fixed income gave her an assurance that they could still survive if her new venture went wrong:

> *During the time that I intended to venture out, I would say my husband encouraged and supported me a lot. He was working back then in January and he is still working so I was thinking, when I look at the family unit we still have a fixed income if something goes wrong and still I can play with anything I've got.* (Participant Q)

The importance of support from a spouse is further confirmed by the bag producer. He explained the pivotal role his wife played in his entrepreneurial intention. He was employed at the time, and his wife assisted him until he resigned from his job. In the meantime, his wife undertook the task of meeting clients. As he recalled:

> *My intention of starting a business developed while I was working in a company. During that time, I registered my business under my wife's name as I was employed at that time. As per my job description, I could not directly get involved in the business. She was an immense support for me. She even went to meet clients when I was working. She followed my instructions and met the client. Later, I resigned from the job and became involved the business fulltime. I realised my intention because of her.* (Participant U)

Similarly, the strawberry jam producer explained her husband's assistance in expanding from growing strawberries to producing and selling jam. Her husband offered to take the responsibility for selling the products. She explained:

> *I was unable to sell the strawberries that I had grown. My husband was business-minded and he suggested that I should start making jam with the strawberries and that he will take responsibility for selling the product. But he said it has to be of good quality otherwise he won't sell. Later on, he took the responsibility of selling products.* (Participant P)

The timber mill owner recalled his father's encouragement:

> *The greatest motivation that I received for my idea of venturing was from my father.* (Participant V)

Similarly, the rice mill owner shared his experience with his family. His mother, father, and younger brother supported his venturing decision. They mentioned that his intended business – a rice mill – was a good idea and they even encouraged his younger brother to join the business. As he explained:

> *My mother, father, and younger brother supported my decision of venturing. They did not say no to that. They always said that the business I intend to start was good and my parents even encouraged my younger brother to join the business.* (Participant Y)

To conclude, for these participants, the family played a key role in supporting and enabling their entrepreneurial intentions. (see Figure 12 above). Support was either instrumental (Participants U and P), non-instrumental (Participants Q, V, and Y) or indecisive (Participant Q). Instrumental support refers to tangible support. Instrumental support was evident in the bag producer's commentary, where he mentioned his wife's support during the intention phase as she met with clients (Participant U). Instrumental support is further evident in the commentary of the strawberry jam producer as her husband assisted her by selling products (Participant P).

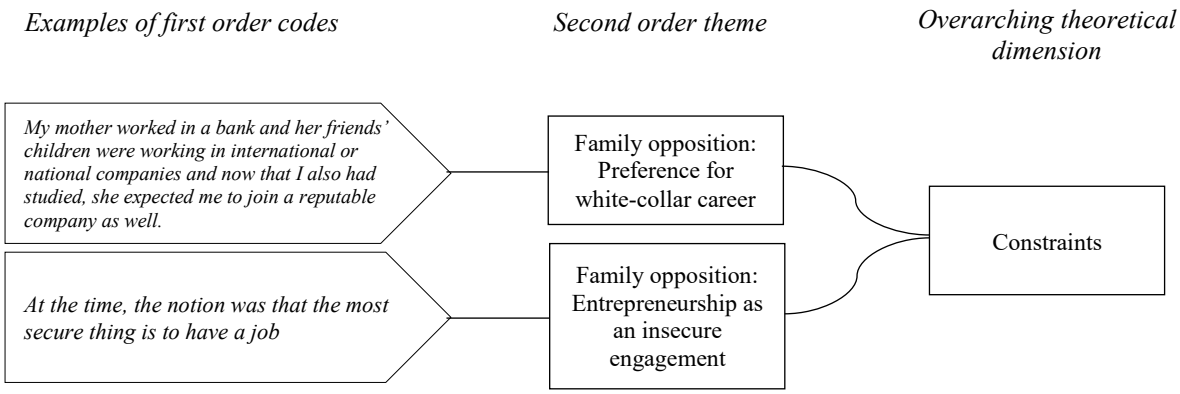
Non-instrumental support refers to intangible support such as encouragement, motivation, etc. For example, the jewellery maker commented on her husband backing her entrepreneurial intention; *[I] would say my husband encouraged and supported me a lot* (Participant Q). Similarly, the comments of the timber mill owner and the rice mill owner demonstrate non-instrumental support. For example, the timber mill owner perceived his father's encouragement as the most significant motivation; *[t]he greatest motivation that I received for my idea of venturing was from my father* (Participant V).

Indecisive support refers to assistance that is neither instrumental nor non-instrumental. Indecisive support is evident in the commentary of the jewellery maker. Even though she stated that her husband encouraged her entrepreneurial intention (non-instrumental support), her commentary depicts an indecisive dimension as well. This is evident in her parents' comments. At one point, she said that her parents were not negative towards her decision of venturing; *[I] would say my parents were not negative towards it* (Participant Q). She further commented that her parents were not a hindrance on her entrepreneurial intention; *[h]owever, they didn't say anything about my decision of venturing* (Participant Q).

Taken collectively, this data revealed that family has plays an essential role in assisting participants' entrepreneurial intention, and family support has instrumental, non-instrumental and indecisive dimensions. Up to now, far too little attention has been paid to the effect of family support on entrepreneurial intention. Much of the research has been on the instrumental support given by families on venture creation. However, it is equally important to recognise the importance of non-instrumental support, especially in the stage of entrepreneurial intention.

5.3.2 Family Opposition

Figure 13: Data Structure of Family Opposition



Source: Research Data

For some participants (A, B, R, and X), the family strongly opposed their entrepreneurial intention (see Figure 13 above). This opposition constrained participants' entrepreneurial intentions. It seems that this opposition does not reflect the personal opinion of family members. Instead, negative societal views of entrepreneurship are transferred through family members to those inclined to entrepreneurship. According to the T-shirt manufacturer, his family had a negative attitude towards his entrepreneurial intention. His family expected him to have a white-collar job instead of starting his own venture. His mother once told him to get a white-collar job as her friend's children were also employed in corporate positions.

> *Even my family opposed my decision to start my own venture and there were good reasons for that. One was that my mother worked in a bank and her friends' children were working in international or national companies and now that I also had studied, she expected me to join a reputable company as well.* (Participant A)

According to the drop shipping business owner, his mother did not comment favourably on his entrepreneurial intention. Her advice was to continue his current employment. As he recalled:

> *My mother did not accept my decision of venturing at first. She advised me to continue the job that I had been doing. I reckon my mother thought that I am going to mess up [destroy] my career if I start my business. She was a government worker. I think that led her to oppose my decision.* (Participant B)

According to the owner of the water-care company, his mother perceived venturing as an inferior activity. She valued a corporate or government job over entrepreneurship. As he said:

… at that time I was not married, and when I mentioned my idea to my mother she was not happy, because at the time the notion was that the most secure thing is to have a job, and that people get into business only if they are unable to do anything else. That was the type of a mentality that was there in those days. Their mind-set was that I should do a government job or work for a private company or a bank. (Participant R)

He also said that his family expectations revolved around community norms.

In our village, the expectation is for children to either become a doctor, engineer, or work in a bank. Those are the usual rankings – doctor, engineer, accountant, or work in a bank. Even our home environment revolves around this perception. (Participant R)

The restaurant owner provided a detailed account of his family's opposition to his entrepreneurial intention. His family opposed his decision of venturing from the beginning. Interestingly, his commentary indicates that families with an entrepreneurial background are more supportive of entrepreneurial intentions than families whose experience is with more conventional occupations such as government jobs. He mentioned that his entrepreneurial intention was opposed due to the lack of business experience of his family members. As he claimed:

Actually, there was opposition from the start on my idea of venturing. My parents discouraged me from the start, the reason being none of our family members were involved in business activities. In my father's family, no one was involved in business, almost all of them had done Government jobs. Even my mother's relatives had been Government servants. (Participant X)

He mentioned some other reasons as to why his father opposed his entrepreneurial intention. His father held the idea that business is associated with unethical practices, and the

respect that a government servant was accorded was not granted to a businessman. Also, his father wanted him to continue with his academic career because he thought that the status one has as an academic is higher than that of a businessman.

> *My father, who was a government servant, was of the opinion that when doing business, you tend to get into unethical practices, that was the notion my father had, and he also believed that the recognition a Government servant had was not found in a businessman. That was one reason. The second reason I believe is that my father was under the impression that I would give up my academic career and devote my life to business. There again he thought that the recognition you get as an academic is not found in a businessman.* (Participant X)

In summary, findings on family opposition to entrepreneurial intention suggest that family members opposed entrepreneurial intention for two reasons (see Figure 13 above). *First*, family members preferred white-collar and government jobs over entrepreneurial careers. That preference has been the prevalent norm in Sri Lankan society. The norms and values of their environment are accepted by family members, and thus the entrepreneurial intentions were opposed. For example, the T-shirt manufacturer said, *my mother worked in a bank and her friends' children were working in international or national companies and now that I also had studied, she expected me to join a reputable company as well.* (Participant A). The restaurant owner expressed; *he [father] also believed that the recognition a Government servant had was not found in a businessman.* (Participant X).

Second, family members opposed entrepreneurial intensions as they perceived entrepreneurship as an insecure occupation. For instance, the owner of the water-care company said, *at the time the notion was that the most secure thing is to have a job* (participant R). Similarly, the drop shipping business owner expressed, *[I] reckon my mother thought that I am*

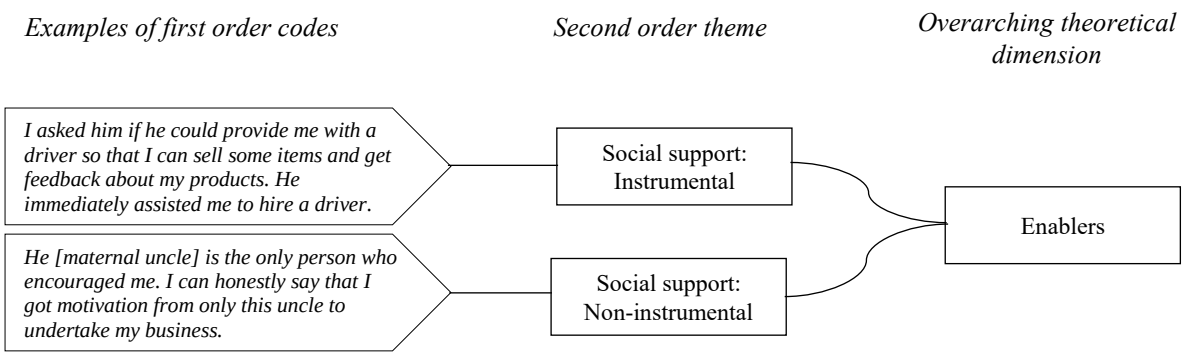
going to mess up [destroy] my career if I start my business (Participant B). As mentioned above, these objections do not reflect the personal opinions of family members, but rather, societal views of entrepreneurship are transferred through family members to the potential entrepreneurs.

This data further indicates that parents with a history of government employment do not encourage their children to pursue entrepreneurial careers. For example, the drop shipping business owner said; *[s]he [mother] was a government worker. I think that led her to oppose my decision* (Participant B). This is further evident in the restaurant owner's commentary. (Participant X).

Taken collectively, this data suggests that some family environments are not conducive to entrepreneurial intention. Family members perceive white-collar careers and government jobs as more attractive occupations than entrepreneurial careers, and they identify entrepreneurship as an insecure occupation. Further, there is a tendency that parents with a history of government employment do not encourage their children to pursue entrepreneurial careers.

5.3.3 Social Support

Figure 14: Data Structure of Social Support



Source: Research Data

For some participants (P, Q, U, R, and X), "social support" has been a supportive community conduit in their venturing intentions (see Figure 14 above). Social support has enabled the participants' entrepreneurial intention. As mentioned above, a social actor (distant community conduits) is any member who is outside the family unit such as relatives, friends, colleagues, peers, etc. The following participant commentaries demonstrate the support of distant community conduits – politicians, lecturers, and teachers – in realising entrepreneurial intention.

Despite her negative impression of the political system in Sri Lanka, the strawberry jam producer recalled an incident where she encountered support from a politician. She explained:

> *Actually, although we always scold politicians, there are some good people too. At that time, the MP [A member of parliament] of Kandy was Mr Kamal [Pseudonym]. He attended my exhibition and when he saw my products, he asked in what way he can help develop my business. So, I asked him if he could provide me with a driver so that I can sell some items and get feedback about my products. He immediately assisted me to hire a driver. Therefore, I still respect him for this.* (Participant P)

The jewellery maker commented on her lecturer's assistance in shaping entrepreneurial her intention.

> *I always had the idea to continue my father's business. But since I was working and was busy with my studies I really didn't have time for that but when I heard about the Entrepreneurship option here (at the university) I was really impressed by that. Dr Saman [Pseudonym] was the Supervisor for Entrepreneurship in the MBA program I followed. He is a very cool, joyful man and he is an Engineer. I think out of all the*

personalities here at this university, he is the best man for me, as he actually taught us in the first year there was a subject of Entrepreneurship. I went and spoke to him and I said that I have some idea like this [venturing] and I want to do it for my final option and he always encouraged me. (Participant Q)

Similarly, the bag producer commented about his lecturer's encouraging thoughts on his entrepreneurial intention. Most of his peers opposed his idea of venturing, while others supported his plans. As he related:

Eighty percent said no, do not do it [venturing on his own]. Within the 20 percent, there was my lecturer, Dr Sugath [Pseudonym], he is a casual guy. He said, "Son just do it, maximum two years and you have enough experience to get back to the trade if you want. So just try this out for two years". In that, 20 percent, I had some strong recommendations but 80 percent of the time, it was a no. (Participant U)

The owner of the water-care company explained his teacher's assistance in shaping entrepreneurial intention. According to him, there were areas where he lacked expertise. He explained that he used his teacher's industry contacts to gather information:

... my knowledge of water treatment and skills were limited to Chemistry but water treatment involves chemistry, microbiology, chemical engineering and other aspects of engineering so I was not able to do it alone. During the gestation period of the venture, I associated with relevant people and I used my teachers' contacts to connect with industry people. I shared my experience and issues with them and discussed how they had rectified their issues. (Participant R)

The restaurant owner acknowledged his maternal uncle's support in realising his entrepreneurial intention, despite his father's opposition.

My maternal uncle was involved in business and he not only had money, but he had a bakery, shops etc. He is the only person who encouraged me. I can honestly say that I got motivation only from this uncle to undertake my business. (Participant X)

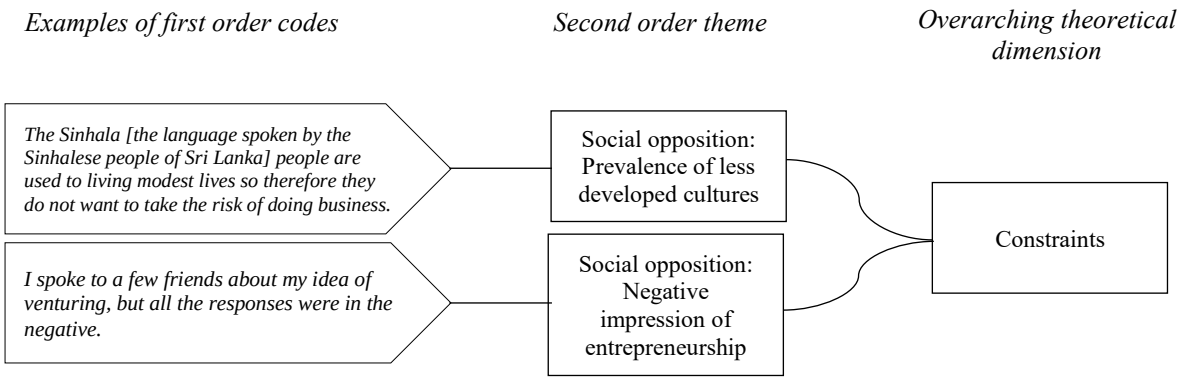
In summary, this data suggests that social support was a community conduit that assisted the participants to realise their entrepreneurial intention (see Figure 14 above). Support was either instrumental (Participant P) or non-instrumental (Participants Q, U, R, and X). As mentioned above, instrumental support refers to tangible support. Instrumental support was evident only in the strawberry jam producer's (Participant P) commentary, where she described the politician's assistance with her entrepreneurial intention.

On the other hand, non-instrumental support was evident in a number of commentaries. As mentioned above, non-instrumental support refers to intangible support such as encouragement, motivation, etc. For example, the restaurant owner recalled his maternal uncle's encouragements of his entrepreneurial intention. (Participant U)

Taken collectively, the data suggested that social community conduits assisted participant entrepreneurial intention either instrumentally or non-instrumentally. Further, the participants demonstrated that non-instrumental support in terms of encouragement and motivation is more prevalent than instrumental support.

5.3.4 Social Opposition

Figure 15: Data Structure of Social Opposition



Source: Research Data

Other participants (Participants A, D, F, U, and Q) described social views as an opposing influence on their entrepreneurial intentions (see Figure 15 above). Opposing influences include the prevalence of less developed cultures and a negative impression of entrepreneurship. Taken collectively, these "unfavourable social norms" were detrimental to participants' entrepreneurial intentions. Unfavourable social norms resulted in the perception of entrepreneurship as an ill-legitimised activity. The experiences of some participants are described below.

The T-shirt manufacturer explained his understanding of the social view of entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka. He understood that the prevalent social opinion was disadvantageous for entrepreneurial initiatives. Social opposition was the main problem that he had to overcome. It is evident in his commentary that people value white-collar positions over entrepreneurship. Thus, social actors opposed entrepreneurial intentions. As he explained:

> *The disadvantage I saw was that Sri Lanka has many problems, financial, social, and economic but the main one I encountered was the social opposition to my starting my*

own business. Many people asked me why I was trying to start my own business. They argued that I was well educated and that I should go overseas or work for a reputable company in the country. They used to wonder why I slaved from morning until night but still I did not have any money in my hand. (Participant A)

In addition, he stated that social opposition even influenced his family. However, his educational background assisted him in managing this tension:

My family were unable to explain this to society and I feel that my education helped me somewhat to overcome this hurdle. (Participant A)

His further explained that Sri Lankan Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) struggle to survive due to working capital issues, and that those issues discourage prospective entrepreneurial activity. He suggested the need for a governmental mechanism to strengthen the working capital cycle for SMEs as it would enhance entrepreneurial intentions. As he explained:

Knowing that it may be difficult for a government to help entrepreneurs step-by-step, it is disappointing to see the effort SMEs have to put just to survive, not to thrive, in the local market context. I feel making more avenues available for working capital would be ideal to boost [enhance] the venturing aspirations of entrepreneurs. Working capital is necessary to run the routine of a venture. However, the prevalent [working capital] issues for SMEs really discourage prospective entrepreneurs. Therefore, the government could devise plans to operationalise working capital mechanisms. (Participant A)

The owner of a computer software engineering company perceived that Sri Lanka has a less developed culture. Commonly held values such as risk-averse behaviour and the non-

legitimacy of entrepreneurship seem to be detrimental to the participant's entrepreneurial intention. According to him, entrepreneurship has not been a part of the Sri Lankan culture. At one point, he claimed:

> *... We have a backward culture. Our people from those days are used to the village concept where they do their own thing and be happy. The Sinhala [the language spoken by the Sinhalese people of Sri Lanka] people are used to living modest lives so therefore they do not want to take the risk of doing business. The entrepreneurs we have in Sri Lanka are those that came from other countries like the Chinese or Arabs. Therefore, that [entrepreneurship]has not been part of our culture. That is one of the reasons Sri Lankans are backward where starting their own business is concerned but if remain like this Sri Lanka will never become a developed country.* (Participant D)

He explained the need for an attitudinal change to uplift entrepreneurial initiatives in the country. According to this participant, if Sri Lanka is to be an entrepreneurial nation, the people need to recognise the need of stepping out from a conventional lifestyle.

> *We need to change with the times and with the world. In those days that may have been good for the people but now, we need to change. If we do not want to change then we have to be like Bhutan where people are quite happy the way they are. They are mainly involved in farming and are quite happy with their lives. So, you can't have it both ways.* (Participant D)

And:

> *We cannot have the impression that we should have monorail and highways like in the Western countries and also be content doing farming and leading modest lives. If we want to go forward then we have to change with the times but if we want to live modest*

lives and be happy then we can use carts and do your own farming and fend for yourself like in the early days. (Participant D)

The chairman of a high-tech company received negative feedback from his friends in response to his entrepreneurial intention:

I spoke to a few friends about my idea of venturing, but all the responses were in the negative. (Participant F)

Similarly, the bag producer recalled the time he decided to capitalise on his entrepreneurial intention. The company that he had worked did not encourage him to resign and start his venture. Eighty per cent of the people at the company rejected his idea of venturing. As he explained:

I had to consult a few people, especially my bosses, about my decision to leave the job and start my own venture. They rejected it vehemently because they were training me for the next level and they always felt I was corporate stuff, not business stuff, not entrepreneurial stuff. Eighty percent said no; do not quit the job... (Participant U)

The jewellery maker recalled her fellow employees' comments on her entrepreneurial intention. Their suggestion was to build the business while working. Her instinct is that entrepreneurship is not encouraged in Sri Lanka. As she explained:

... when I tell some people [fellow employees] about my intention of venturing, they were like, no I don't think that is the right decision, you should do both for a while and then maybe after two to three years, after building up the business you can leave the job. They may have perceived entrepreneurship as a risky activity. Also, as far as I see, entrepreneurship is not really encouraged in Sri Lanka. (Participant Q)

In addition, she mentioned the nature of the education system in Sri Lanka. As she understood, students are sent through pre-determined educational streams such as maths, biology, commerce, and arts. She recognised it as a barrier for someone to prosper as the education system does not allow a child to go outside these pathways. She said:

> *When you look at the structure of education in Sri Lanka a student or a child is forced to follow something in pre-defined streams. So, if you are an A Level [Advanced level examination] student it will be either Maths or Bio [Biology], Commerce or Arts. Those are the main four streams, but the education system does not encourage someone to go beyond these four options. And to be maybe good Gemmologists when they are at the age of twenty, if that happens, then we could do all these things when we are younger. If an exposure to all industries and experience is given to a child when he or she is the correct age then they can decide on their own, ok which industry I'm going to be in.. So, then you would know how the mentality and how parents and teachers would react and how they want students to study. Basically, they want you to pick one of these four options and just after O Levels [Ordinary level examination] you go there.* (Participant Q)

She further commented on the societal perception of entrepreneurship and corporate jobs. According to her, families value white collar jobs over entrepreneurship. She believes this perception is instilled in children's minds and thus they tend to prefer white collar careers. She commented on how this societal view impacts on prospective entrepreneurship:

> *... when you say that you are in business and when you say that you are in a certain position in this company, let's say I'm a Senior Manager in Excel Plc [Pseudonym] and then if I say I'm a businessman in jewellery, those two perceptions are really different. They say ok, he's just a businessman, and when you say you are a Senior*

Manager in Excel Plc., Excel is a very large company and you must be doing a good job. Some families I know if the person say, has a son or husband who is wearing a tie and going to work, that is seen as a something really good, something really amazing. But like entrepreneurs, they don't wear ties, they can just go with slippers and with shorts and then people would look at them and think, ok this man cannot be from a good occupation, he must be just walking around or whatever. So that cultural aspect is there from childhood so what a lot of students and a lot of people think is that ok I should get a job. This scenario is not favourable for entrepreneurial initiatives. (Participant Q)

To conclude, this data suggest that participants do not identify social factors as advantageous for entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka for two reasons (see Figure 15 above). *First*, the prevalence of a less developed culture. These participants believed in the existence of less developed culture due to the pervasiveness of risk-averse behaviour in society. For example, the owner of a computer software engineering company believed that risk-taking has not been a part of Sinhalese culture due to their history of living a modest life. He believed in the need for an attitudinal change to elevate entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka, and the need to "step out" of a conventional lifestyle (Participant D).

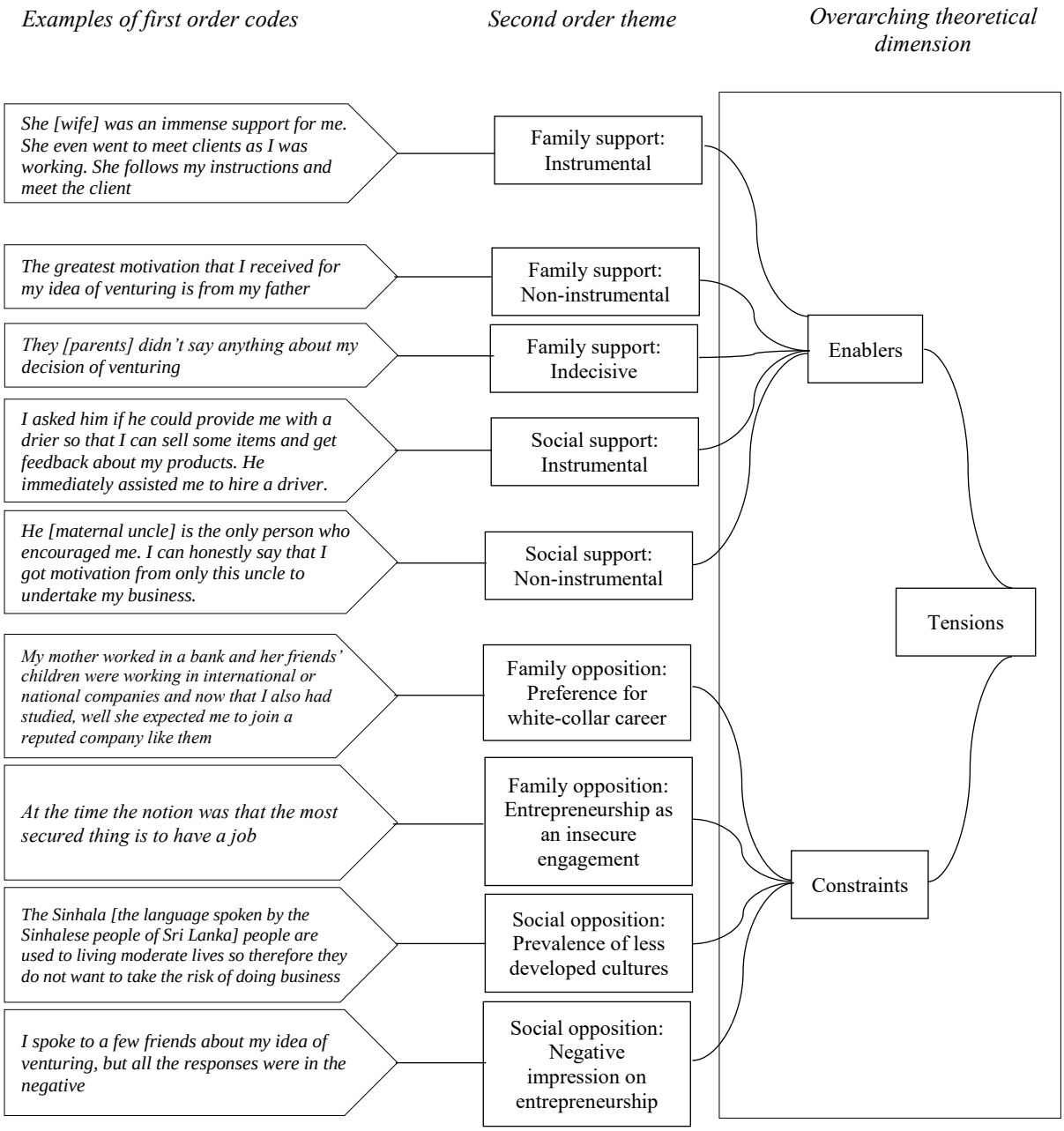
Second, some participants (Participants A, F, U, and Q) understood that existing societies have negative impressions of entrepreneurship and that there is a preference for white-collar careers over entrepreneurial initiatives. For instance, the T-shirt manufacturer mentioned social opposition as the main barrier that he had to overcome to realise his entrepreneurial intention. Many people suggested he should pursue a white-collar career instead of pursuing entrepreneurial aspirations (Participant A). Similar evidence is found in the jewellery maker's

commentary where she stated that the society values white-collar careers over entrepreneurship.

Other participants experienced negative feedback regarding their entrepreneurial intention resulting in them perceiving that society has a negative impression of entrepreneurship. For example, the chairman of a high-tech company expressed; *[I] spoke to a few friends about my idea of venturing, but all the responses were in the negative* (Participant F). Similar evidence is found in the bag producer's and jewellery maker's commentaries where they stated that their entrepreneurial intention was opposed due to community members' negative feedback about their entrepreneurial intentions.

Participants suggested remedial actions to mitigate social opposition. The T-shirt manufacturer he explained the need for government strategies to help entrepreneurial aspirations and in particular, of the importance of the availability of working capital. He said; *[I] feel making more avenues available for working capital would be ideal to boost [enhance] venturing aspirations of entrepreneurs. Working capital is necessary to run a routine of a venture. However, the prevalent issues of SMEs really discourage prospective entrepreneurs. Therefore, the government can devise plans to operationalise working capital mechanisms* (Participant A). Other remedial actions include structural changes to the education system in Sri Lanka. At one point, the Jewellery maker commented that the current education system hinders entrepreneurial aspirations. As she explained: *If you are an A Level [Advanced level examination] student it will be either Maths or Bio [Biology], Commerce or Arts. Those are the main four streams, but the education system does not encourage someone to go beyond these four options.* (Participant Q).

Figure 16: Data Structure of Community Tensions



Source: Research Data

Overall, participant descriptions of family and social community conduits and their influence on entrepreneurial intention provide essential insights. Family and social community conduits have had a helpful (enablers) or detrimental (constraints) effect on their entrepreneurial intention (see Figure 16 above).

The effect of family and social community stances on entrepreneurial intention showed an instrumental and non-instrumental dimension. As mentioned above, the former refers to tangible help, and the latter refers to intangible support. Most notably, the non-instrumental dimension was evident in more participant commentaries compared to the instrumental dimension. Non-instrumental assistance such as encouragement, motivation etc. was prevalent in the participant commentaries implying its significance at the entrepreneurial intention stage.

In terms of constraints, families opposed entrepreneurial intentions for two reasons – their preference for white-collar careers and perception of entrepreneurship as an insecure occupation. As mentioned above, family opposition does not reflect the personal opinions of family members. Instead, opposing societal norms about entrepreneurship are transferred through family members to potential entrepreneurs. Data suggested that families come from environments that are not conducive to entrepreneurial action. Further, there is a tendency for parents with occupational histories of government jobs to not encourage their children to pursue entrepreneurial careers.

Social community conduits were detrimental to entrepreneurial intentions owing to the prevalence of less developed cultures and a negative impression of entrepreneurship. Therefore, participants did not identify social factors as favourable for entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka. With the prevalence of collective societies in Sri Lanka (Premaratne, 2008), social norms are probably more predictive of entrepreneurial intention in collective societies compared to individualistic societies (Kristiansen & Indarti, 2011). Commentaries suggested two remedial actions to elevate entrepreneurial initiatives in Sri Lanka – that of making working capital avenues available for upcoming entrepreneurs and changing the education system in Sri Lanka to eliminate its compartmentalised nature.

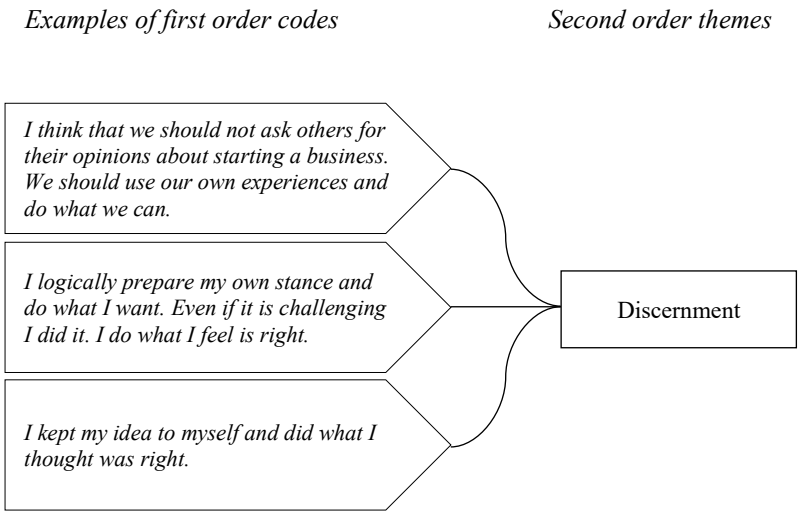
Communities that are both helpful and detrimental to the participants' entrepreneurial intention create tensions (see Figure 16 above). The analysis of data suggested that the participants' religious background – Buddhism – has provided a way for them to relieve those tensions. Findings indicated that the quality of being discerning – discernment – has been helpful as it is about believing what is true in the light of one's awareness. Right livelihood is also a Buddhist tenet that guided the participants to shape their entrepreneurial intention. The next section explores participant commentaries relating to their religious backgrounds.

5.4 Tenets of Buddhism

In this section, the "tenets of Buddhism" refers to the principles that guided the participants to alleviate the tensions imposed by communities when realising their entrepreneurial intention. There are two tenets in this respect. *First*, "discernment" is the acceptance of one's subconscious thoughts, emotions, and desires. Participant commentaries (Participants A, B, F, H, J, I, M, N, S, and T) revealed that they reviewed the tensions imposed by the outer environment and arrived at a decision consistent with his/her values. *Second*, "right livelihood" refers to ethical conduct (Participants A, E, G, F, M, and Q). The participants' objective was to have a dignified life with wealth obtained through rightful means. They had refrained from engaging in businesses such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, cheating etc. The participant commentaries on the first tenet – discernment – are elaborated below as they relate to entrepreneurial intention.

5.4.1 Discernment

Figure 17: Data Structure of Discernment



Source: Research data

The quality of being discerning – discernment (see Figure 17 above) – relates to the Kālāma Sutta[8] of Buddhist philosophy where the Lord Buddha advised one's striving for the goal must depend only on himself/herself and not seek others to lean on (Dhammapada verse 160).

The chairman of a business conglomerate explained his understanding of discernment. Citing Kālāma Sutta, at one point he stressed the importance of accepting one's own awareness. He vehemently stated: "Do what you think is right":

> *If you don't see something, if you don't find out anything, if you don't have anything, don't believe what I (The Buddha) say, don't believe in what the Buddhist teachings tell you, don't believe what the prophets say but do what you think is right.* (Participant T)

[8] Kālāma Sutta is used to advocate prudence using proper logical reasoning arguments for inquiries in the practice that relates to the discipline of seeking truth, wisdom, and knowledge whether it is religious or not.

Again, quoting Kālāma Sutta he stated:

> *"Atta hi attano natho ko hi natho paro siya attana hi sudantenanatham labhati dullabham"* (Participant T)

The Buddha[9] taught that we should believe only what is true in the light of our own awareness. It is taught not to subject ourselves to authority and popular views, but to assess what is morally wholesome to ourselves (Ng, 2020). Therefore, reviewing the outer environment and arriving at a decision that is consistent with one's values is important. Participant interviews revealed that this tenet was applied to manage the tension imposed by communities when participants realising their entrepreneurial intention. At one point, the chairman of a high-tech company strongly stated:

> *I think that we should not ask others for their opinions about starting a business. We should use our own experiences and do what we can. The other party may not understand what we are trying to do therefore they are not in a position to give us advice. Therefore, I now have my reservations about getting opinions from anyone. We have our own ideas so why do we have to get other people's opinions? It is ok to get one or two but if we have confidence and are strong in our own ideas then we need to seek advice from others as a support.* (Participant F)

Participants J, M, N, I and B held similar views. Their comments show that their emotions are not controlled by external inputs. The owner of a software development company stated his view about taking others' ideas into consideration:

[9] The Meaning of above Pāli canon is that one is indeed one's own lord. With oneself well restrained, one will obtain the lord that is so hard to get (Dhammapada verse 160).

No actually, I did not ask anyone about it [entrepreneurial intent] at that time because there was a need in the market and I felt that with my ten years of experience I should be able to do it. (Participant J)

Similarly, the money broking company owner stated that he does what he feels is right:

I logically prepare my own stance and do what I want. Even if it is challenging I did it. I do what I feel is right. (Participant M)

The cane furniture manufacturer commented:

I usually make my own decisions; I did not ask for any advice regarding my venture aspirations. (Participant N)

The chairman of a business conglomerate added he did what he thought was right:

I kept my idea to myself and did what I thought was right. I also have a lot of patience and I think that this patience has contributed to my success today. I do not worry about anything. I did not even blame anyone, but I did what I thought was right and kept improving my business. I came to this position that way. (Participant I)

The drop shipping business owner said that he was open to other people's ideas about his entrepreneurial intent. However, it is evident that his openness was not a constraint for entrepreneurial intention. As he recalled:

At that time, he [brother-in-law] was a Computer Engineer at LOLI [Pseudonym] therefore he had some of knowledge about this [information technology] field so I got advice from him. I asked his advice about starting this (drop shipping) business,

whether I should give up my job before starting this etc. I actually made the final decision, but I made it a point to ask his advice. (Participant B)

The owner of a career guidance agency mentioned the importance of believing in one's capacity. As he explained:

... my opinion is like if you truly believe in your capacity, if you truly find the vision is lucrative get the people who can really be a part of it who have the intellectual ability to contribute to the common cause. We can completely ignore the rest. So that has been my way of thinking in this endeavour. In addition, I have organised many business initiatives, I have gone through successes, and failures so I knew it will be possible to do. Once you go through the same cycle for the second time, you know the path. (Participant S)

The timber mill owner whose entrepreneurial intention was predominantly influenced by his father, recalled his father's advice about listening to other people's opinions:

I run my business according to my father's principles and one thing he told me was not to listen to what other people say, but think twice, and do what you think is right. (Participant V)

These comments show that the tenet of discernment has been instrumental in pursuing entrepreneurial intention and in arriving at a decision that is compatible with the entrepreneur's sub consciousness. In this way, discernment reinforces one's emotional stability and participants believe that their lives are less controlled by external forces.

In contrast with these participants, the T-shirt manufacturer had a different idea about being open to others' ideas. As he explained:

When someone tells me something and if I do not have a thorough knowledge about it, I do not try to make any changes because they are talking from experience and they know what they are talking about. For example, there are occasions where my friends have given me inputs (about his business idea) and I think to myself; why I did not think of that? There are other times I feel that if the other person does not think the same way as me then he may not want to share his ideas because he thinks that I am confined to one way of thinking. That means if I have learnt something, I only think of it in that way. In that instance the only way for me to change is for me to unlearn what I learnt and start afresh. There may be occasions where they see more than what I see. Sometimes it may seem like a non-starter, but it may end up as being a good opportunity for me. (Participant A)

He further explained that he analyses the input given on his entrepreneurial intention by weighing pros and cons. He gave an example where he encountered a dilemma between the brand name and business model. Later he understood the importance of a business model over a brand name at the intention stage of the venture. As he explained:

Actually, I weigh the pros and cons of the input given to my idea [entrepreneurial intention] and then try to make a decision. For example, when I first wanted to develop a brand I spent several days on coming up with a good name for the brand. Later I realised that this brand which I took so much time to create is pointless if there is no proper business model. This was something I realised later on – that it is not the name that I should take so much trouble over, but, rather I need to pay attention to the business model or framework. (Participant A)

The chairman of a software development company commented about an outcome of being discerning. He mentioned that it gave him the capacity to sense the market and assisted him to predict market trends.

> *Actually, I studied this concept (software development), there was a lot of input from the people, however, after a thorough analysis, I decided to pursue it (entrepreneurial intention). I think I am good at analysing. Also, I think that gave me the ability to read the market signals and identify and predict the future market trends. These may be right or wrong [riskier] but predicting the market trend is a skill and we should be able to judge which direction the market is heading. That is what I did.* (Participant H)

In summary, this data suggests that the quality of being discerning – discernment (see Figure 17 above) – has been helpful to ease the tensions imposed by communities when participants realise entrepreneurial intention. The participants reviewed the tensions imposed by the outer environment and arrived at a decision that is compatible with his/her values. In this way, discernment is about believing what is true in the light of one's awareness.

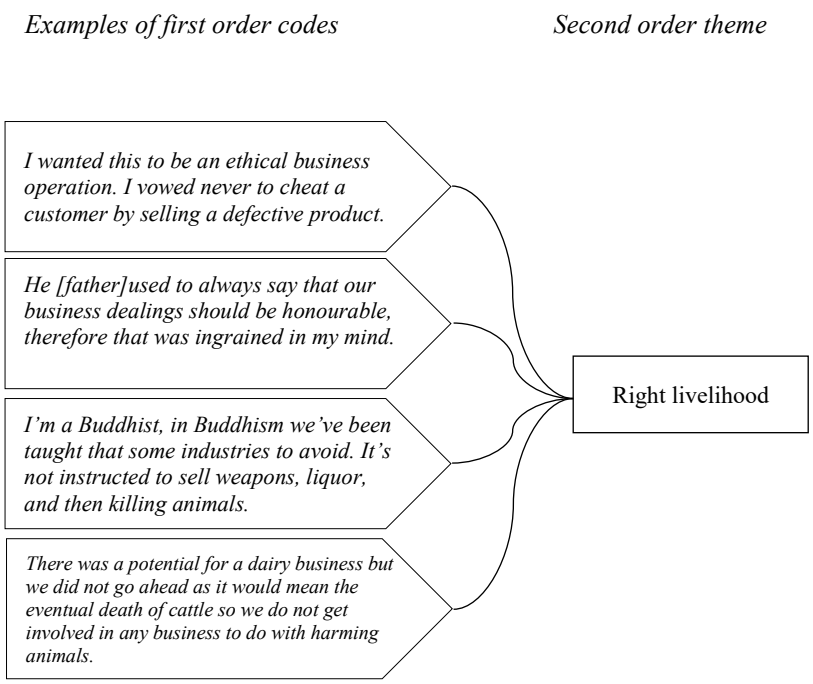
The chairman of a high-tech company pointed out that his friends were negative about his entrepreneurial intention. He stated: *[I] spoke to a few friends about my idea of venturing, but all the responses were in the negative* (Participant F). However, his quality of being discerning – discernment – assisted him to proceed with his entrepreneurial intent. According to him, one should not get opinions about starting a business due to perceptual differences. He said he has reservations about getting opinions from others; *[I] think that we should not ask others for their opinions about starting a business. We should use our own experiences and do what we can. The other party may not understand what we are trying to do therefore they are not in a position to give us advice. Therefore, I now have my reservations about getting opinions from anyone* (Participant F).

Similarly, many other participants eased the tensions imposed by community conduits using the quality of being discerning. For example, the money broking company owner stated that he does what he feels is right: *[I] logically prepare my own stance and do what I want. Even if it is challenging I did it. I do what I feel is right* (Participant M). The cane furniture manufacturer expressed; *[I] usually make my own decisions, I did not ask for any advice regarding my venture aspirations* (Participant N).

Discernment reinforces one's emotional stability as it is about believing what is true in the light of one's awareness. Emotionally stable people are less controlled by external influences as they tend to be less tense, and less prone to self-doubt and insecurities. Emotionally stable people manage their composure even under stressful situations. In this way, emotional stability reinforced by discernment assists entrepreneurs to remain calm and achieve their entrepreneurial intentions even if their ideas are not accepted by families and social communities.

5.4.2 Right Livelihood

Figure 18: Data Structure of Right Livelihood



Source: Research data

The second tenet - Right livelihood (see Figure 18 above) - comes under the ethical conduct ('Sila') of the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism (Rāhula, 2006). An ethical decision is a decision that is both morally and legally acceptable to the larger community (Jones, 1991). In the view of Buddhism, ethical decisions entail avoiding the deliberate (intentional) harming of other creatures or earning a living in a harmful way. This has been a tenet that guided the T-shirt manufacturer's entrepreneurial intention. He recalled his intention of developing an ethical business. He had a strong belief to not cheat customers. According to him, ethicality has been a guiding principle since he intended to start a business. As he explained:

> *I wanted this to be an ethical business operation. I vowed never to cheat a customer by selling a defective product. I firmly believe in that and I feel that I have started and conducted my business in an ethical way to date.* (Participant A)

In a subsequent interview, he commented about a new business opportunity that he rejected as it went against his conscience. As he said:

> *During the Corona Virus in Sri Lanka, a company asked me to manufacture a bulk order of facemasks. However, I rejected that opportunity because I do not have enough technical expertise to produce facemasks. I could have done it with some materials, and I am sure it is very profitable, but I did not accept that order as it goes against my conscience. Ever since, my intention is to not to cheat customers.* (Participant A)

The owner of an organic restaurant and a farm shared her entrepreneurial intention of offering good products to customers:

> *I always wanted sell something good to our customers. Giving good things to society is something that comes with Buddhist thinking.* (Participant W)

She further shared how she incorporated ethical conduct into her business to protect the customer. She said that her restaurant only sells organic products. She also shared that she protects the ground by not poisoning it.

> *Our first ethic is that anything that is poisoned is not sold in the business. No matter how profitable, we do not sell poisoned goods or food. We are operating organic farms too. By doing it we also protect the first precept of five precepts. An organic farm is where no poison falls to the ground.* (Participant W)

Similar to participant W, the Jewellery maker had the idea of doing something good. She further believed that giving something good results in good returns as well. She said that she incorporated these beliefs in her business. As she explained:

> *I actually believe the core aspect of the religion, not the frills around it, so still even if you have a re-birth or whatever it is, I would say that if you do something good it will come back to you, even if you make losses or whatever it is. This has been always in my mind. I believe this has been the guiding principle in my business too.* (Participant Q)

The chairman of a business conglomerate explained how he shaped his entrepreneurial intention with his understanding of unwholesome Karma. He stated:

> *Lord Buddha has said that people are born with Karma [In the Buddhist tradition, Karma refers to action driven by intention (cetanā) which leads to future consequences (wholesome and unwholesome Karma)]. I believe that it (Karma) is there, but we can always do things to prevent this. If anything bad is to happen because of Karma, this can be prevented. According to the Dhawalasutraya, Lord Buddha has put some salt crystals into a coconut shell, added water and watched them dissolve. If you put this dissolved salt into a well what will happen? So, everyone is born with Karma but this*

Karma can be reduced and this can be done only by doing good things like giving alms, sharing, etc. So, this has always been in my mind, I wanted to create a business that does not accumulate any unwholesome karma. (Participant G)

Similar to participant G, the chairman of a real estate development company commented about engaging in ethical business. According to him, unwholesome Karma (sin) is prevented by refraining from unethical practices.

I am a Buddhist, so I go to the temple; my mother is a very kind-hearted person so that has been imparted to us also. Because of that, I did not want to engage any unethical deeds. What religion teaches us is that we should be ashamed and afraid to sin. If we are not ashamed or afraid to sin then we can do almost anything. Therefore, we follow this precept, and I did not want to do anything unethical. (Participant E)

The timber mill owner recalled his father's advice about ethical business conduct. His father advised him to earn money lawfully and to behave in an honourable manner. As he said:

… one thing my father always used to say was that if you make money in wrong and unlawful ways, you will never prosper. He used to always say that our business dealings should be honourable, therefore that was ingrained in my mind. (Participant V)

Some other participants had ensured right livelihood through by not engaging in harmful occupations such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, cheating etc. As the chairman of a high-tech company recalled, there were business activities that he had refrained from:

My father once told me there are certain things you should refrain from in order to be a good businessperson. One is gambling, and others include patronising casinos,

consuming alcohol, giving money on interest. I did not want to engage with these types of businesses. (Participant F)

He continued recalling his father's advice on venturing intentions. He further put forth some profitable business opportunities that he refrained from investing in due to his urge to ensure right livelihood in his entrepreneurial intentions. According to his father, trading meat and investing in a casino are businesses that need to be avoided. Recalling his father's advice, he revealed his satisfaction for not being involved with such activities.

He said to refrain from consuming meats. If I had invested my profits in starting a casino this would have been a cash cow for me. You never hear of a casino running into a loss. Another thing is there are few overheads, the Government taxes are the only major expenses, but this could be regained in a couple of days but because of what my father said and because of my Buddhist upbringing starting a venture like this is against my conscience. Some people may consider this as a weakness on my part, I have the money to invest so why don't I do it? But I have been conditioned that way so it's difficult to come out of that. It may be for better or for worse but in my mind I have the satisfaction that I did not do it. Also, I have the satisfaction of knowing that my business is contributing towards protecting people [he produces vehicle air bags and seat belt switches]so every morning when I travel to work and see my offices I always think, even today, that I am contributing to this. On the other hand, if I used by profits to invest in opening a wine store I don't think I would have that same satisfaction. I think that is because of my Buddhist upbringing. That foundation is holding me back from doing these things. (Participant F)

Similarly, the chairman of a business conglomerate claimed that he did not invest in a ventured due to the intention of not to harm animals. He saw the potential for a dairy business

but refrained from investing due to the eventual death of cattle. He gave examples of other businesses and activities he would avoid:

> *There was a potential for a dairy business, but we did not go ahead as it would mean the eventual death of cattle, so we do not get involved in any business to do with harming animals. Then comes alcohol, arms, and ammunition, then any business where we need to bribe politicians, environmental pollution, cut trees etc. In addition, any type of business that involves doing things against our culture and race.* (Participant G)

Also, he added that his intention was not to harm society.

> *At the outset, we decided that we will not do anything harmful and will only be involved in good businesses. We do not want to make profits by harming society. In Buddhism there are several businesses that are unsuitable and should be avoided. We have therefore not done that.* (Participant G)

The chairman of a dairy product company commented on his intention of backward integration. As his business's main ingredient is milk, he had the thought to invest in a farm so that he can supply his own raw milk. However, he refrained investing in the farm due to the eventual death of cattle. He clearly explained that it went against his conscience.

> *I must tell you one thing though. The main ingredient for this industry [yoghurt] is milk. I wanted to start a farm so that I could supply my own milk but because of Buddhism I rejected the idea. If I started a farm as a business, if we bought a calf, we will not be able to keep the calf for even two months. At least a week before that we need to sell him off. Companies buy them to make sausages etc. so they are sold by the kilo. That I could not do. Another thing is we will have to buy seven to eight animals and after a while we will have to sell the cow. So, because I could not do these things, I rejected*

the idea of starting a farm. I don't know if I did this because of Buddhism or because of my own ideals. But even if I was a Muslim or a Christian I would have worked according to my conscience. There are some things that go against your conscience and this was one of those things. (Participant K)

He further commented about government support in starting farms. Despite the government's willingness to offer him a 500 acres land to start a farm he had rejected the opportunity as it was against his conscience. However, he relied on his conscience and his religious upbringing had no influence.

The Government was willing to give me 500 acres of land for an animal farm; it was only because of this I did the research and when I found this out I decided against it. I don't know if this was because of Buddhism; may be if I was a Muslim I would not have felt like this. Muslims say that they have a right to kill animals and eat meat but in Buddhism this is not so. So, if we think in this way we cannot do any industry according to Buddhism and I also can consider myself to be connected to this in some way. (Participant K)

The money broking company owner also recalled a prospective business that he refrained from investing in. He had the opportunity to invest on Maldives fish business. Due to his religious upbringing, he decided against the investment.

Before embarking on CB Capital [Pseudonym], I got a chance to invest in a Maldives fish business. Lord Buddha has preached that we should not undertake any business involving animals, so I had a doubt about this as I was going to deal with dead animals. I did not pursue this business. (Participant M)

The jewellery maker and the owner of an organic restaurant and farm commented on how they ensured right livelihood in their venturing intentions. At one point, the jewellery maker's commentary indicated that she had an understanding of what industries to avoid. She expressed her happiness that her business is about making people beautiful:

> *I'm a Buddhist, in Buddhism we've been taught to avoid some industries. We are not permitted to sell weapons, liquor, or kill animals. Sometimes I think about what I do, and I feel happy because what I do is make people beautiful [her current business is jewellery]*. (Participant Q)

The owner of an organic restaurant and a farm clearly stated that she did not want to engage with any business activity that is not accepted by Buddhism. Commenting on the businesses that need to be avoided, she related that agriculture is what Lord Buddha taught us to do. As she explained:

> *I did not want to engage with any businesses that are not accepted by Buddhism. There are five trades to avoid, the poison trade, animal trade, meat trade, arms sales, and slave trade, according to the Dhamma preached by the Buddha. Agriculture is the first thing that Lord Buddha taught us to do. That's what I do.* (Participant W)

In conclusion, for these entrepreneurs, right livelihood (see Figure 18 above) has been a tenet that guided them to shape their entrepreneurial intentions. Right livelihood teaches one which entrepreneurial intentions to pursue. Some participants (A, W, Q, G, E and V) ensured right livelihood in their entrepreneurial intentions by engaging in ethical business. For example, the T-shirt manufacturer said that he wanted to run an ethical business (Participant A). While others (Participants F, G, M, Q and W) refrained from engaging in businesses such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, cheating etc. For

example, the chairman of a high-tech company expressed that there are business activities that he had refrained from (Participant F).

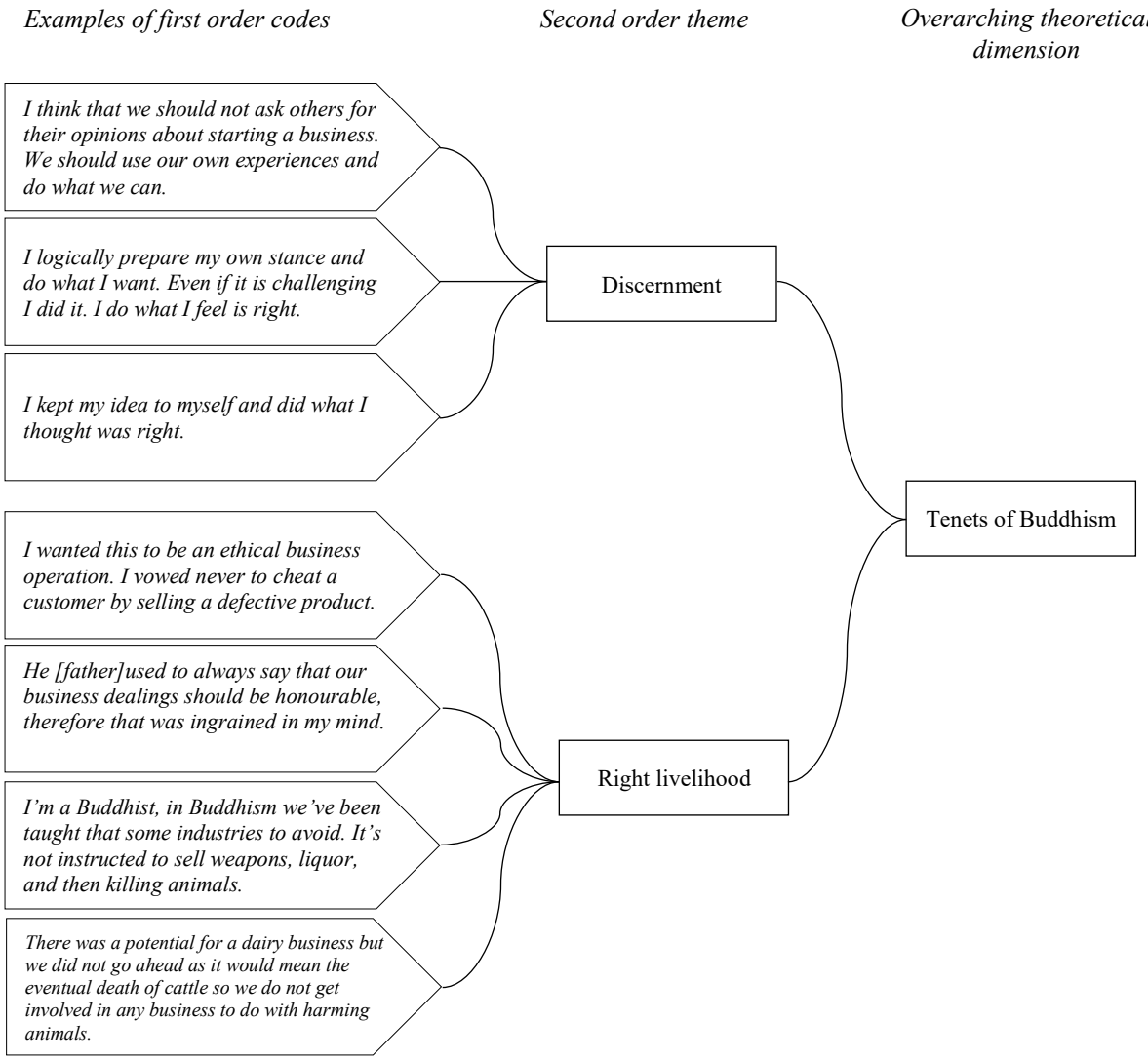
The participants who ensured right livelihood by incorporating ethicality into their entrepreneurial intentions depicted avoiding deliberately harming others or earning a living in a harmful way. For example, for some participants (A and W) ethicality is about treating customers well, for few others (Q, G, and E) it is about preventing unwholesome Karma. Their presumption was that engaging in an unethical business accumulates unwholesome Karma. For instance, the chairman of a real estate development company said that he did not want to engage in any unethical deeds because he was afraid of sin (unwholesome Karma) (Participant E). Further, one participant (V) understood ethicality as earning money lawfully and engaging in an honourable business.

The participants who ensured right livelihood by refraining from the aforementioned businesses showed that many were inclined to be involved in a business that does not harm animals (Participants F, G and M). Participants perceived businesses involving in killing animals as profitable. However, they had refrained engaging in such businesses due to their religious upbringing. For example, the chairman of a business conglomerate claimed a venturing prospect that he prevented investing due to the intention of not to harm animals. He saw the potential for dairy business but refrained investing due to the eventual death of cattle. As he said; *[t]here was a potential for a dairy business but we did not go ahead as it would mean the eventual death of cattle so we do not get involved in any business to do with harming animals* (Participant G).

Findings further showed that in spite of the Buddhist context in Sri Lanka, businesses related to killing animals are promoted. For instance, the chairman of a business conglomerate said; *[t]he Government was willing to give me 500 acres of land for an animal farm* (Participant

G). This leads to the assumption that the Sri Lankan government favours profitable businesses initiatives. The widespread religious context is not really considered in promoting entrepreneurship.

Figure 19: Data Structure of the Tenets of Buddhism



Source: Research data

Taken collectively, the above sections on discernment and right livelihood explained the findings on the tenets of Buddhism (see Figure 19 above). *First*, discernment was realised as believing what is true in the light of one's awareness. The quality of being discerning assisted

participants to alleviate tensions provoked by the community conduits. They reviewed the tensions imposed by the outer environment and arrived at a decision that was compatible with their values. *Second*, right livelihood was recognised as a tenet that guided participants' entrepreneurial intentions. Some understood right livelihood as the ethical conduct of business while others defined it as not engaging in harmful occupations such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, cheating etc.

5.5 The Integrative Framework

This chapter presented the findings related to the first phase of entrepreneurial action – that of entrepreneurial intention and its interaction with community and Buddhism. This intention phase of the venture equates to the gestation stage of a venture where entrepreneurial ideas and intentions are being generated (see Figure 20 below).

Entrepreneurial intention is defined as one's inclination to form an entrepreneurial venture. There are three underlying motivations of entrepreneurial intention. *First*, making money through forming an entrepreneurial venture. *Second*, engaging in entrepreneurship as a passionate activity. *Third*, serving society through entrepreneurship as a purpose. In this way, entrepreneurial intention is formed by the individual's attitude towards entrepreneurship, found through extrinsic (money) and intrinsic (passion and purpose) motivations. Extrinsically motivated entrepreneurial intentions include an expectation of separable outcomes such as pride, making money, or even avoiding unemployment. Intrinsically motivated entrepreneurial intentions include personal interests that drive an individual to achieve a particular outcome, such as, need for achievement, reciprocity, self-determination, and the like. These are personal needs and desires to form a venture.

Regarding the community influence on the intention to create a venture, the culture, local norms, beliefs, perceptions, and history adopted by close and distant communities play both helpful and detrimental roles. As Klyver (2007) writes, community influence is stronger,

especially at the entrepreneurial intention stage. According to Rivis and Sheeran (2003) the perceived pressure from important others (e.g., friends, relatives) determines one's action.

The close community conduit ("family") is the group that the entrepreneur is surrounded by and consists of parents, spouse, and children living together as a unit. The distant community conduit ("social") is any member who is outside the family unit, such as relatives, friends, colleagues, peers, etc. Family and social support for entrepreneurial intention can be either instrumental (tangible assistance) or non-instrumental (intangible assistance). In addition, family assistance showed an indecisive dimension (assistance that is neither instrumental nor non-instrumental) as well.

Family and social influence on entrepreneurship have both been examined in the literature of social network research (Newbert, Tornikoski, & Quigley, 2013), and family business research (Koropp, Grichnik, & Kellermanns, 2013). However, there appears to be a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between family and social supports provided – especially at the intention phase of a venture.

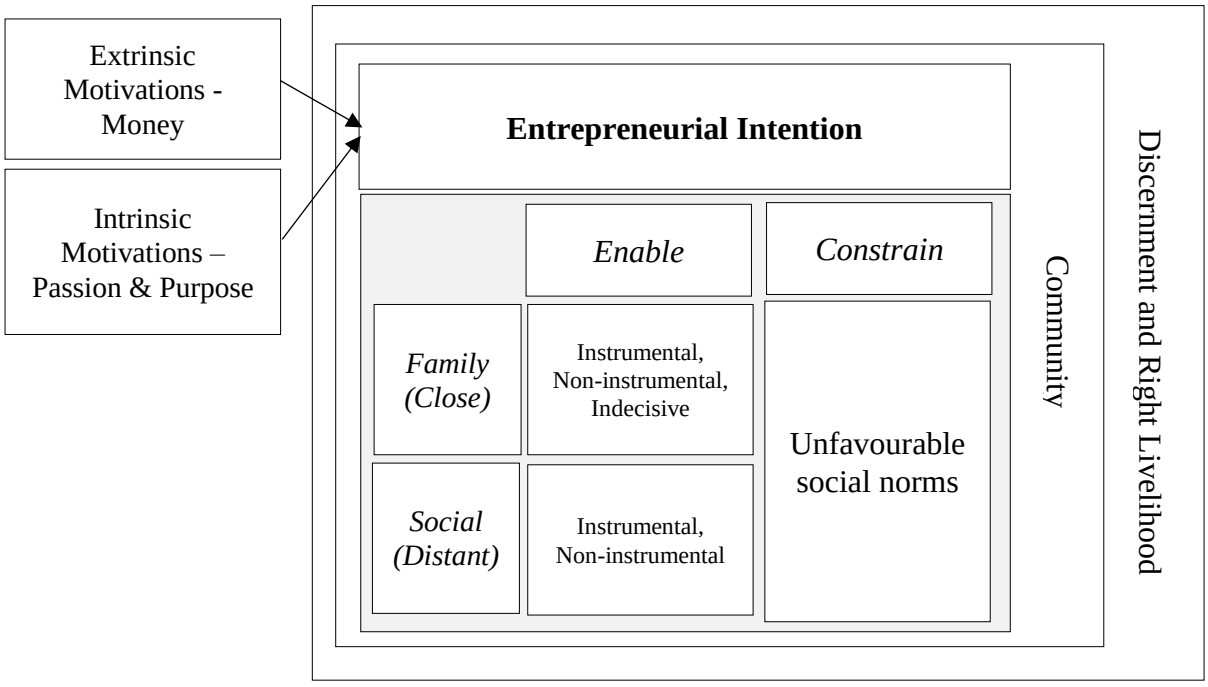
Family opposition occurred mainly due to two reasons – that of family members' preference for white-collar careers over entrepreneurship and their identification of entrepreneurship as an insecure occupation. Social opposition occurred due to less developed cultures and negative impressions of entrepreneurship. Taken collectively, these unfavourable social norms constrained entrepreneurial intention. In this way, the helpful and detrimental roles of families and the social community shape entrepreneurial intention.

Communities that are both helpful and detrimental to entrepreneurial intention create tension within individuals. This tension is alleviated by their Buddhist upbringing. In this way, Buddhism shapes the intention to create a venture. Even if entrepreneurial intentions are constrained by communities, discernment assists individuals to proceed. The quality of being discerning – discernment – of Buddhism teaches one to believe only what is true in the light of

his/her own awareness. Discernment reinforces one's emotional stability. Emotionally stable people are less controlled by external influences. Those who are not emotionally stable are highly sensitive and tend to be bothered by the smallest stresses. They tend to feel tense, and have a high level of self-doubt and insecurity, while emotionally stable people remain composed even under stressful situations. In this way, emotional stability reinforced by discernment assists entrepreneurs to remain calm and achieve their entrepreneurial intentions even their ideas are unaccepted by families and social communities.

Entrepreneurial intentions are further shaped by the Buddhist teaching of right livelihood – primarily in two ways. *First*, the tenet offers a standard for entrepreneurs to engage in ethical busines activities. *Second*, it suggests businesses to not engage with. Activities such as trading arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, and cheating are not promoted in the philosophy of Buddhism. The relationship between entrepreneurial intention, community and Buddhism can be summarised to an integrative model as follows (see Figure 20 below).

Figure 20: The Integrative Framework of Entrepreneurial Intention



The next chapter, Chapter Six is the second of the three data chapters. It will explain the research findings relating to the second phase of entrepreneurial action – that of resourcing.

Chapter Six

Resourcing

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings related to entrepreneurial intention – the first phase of entrepreneurial action. This chapter focuses on the second phase of entrepreneurial action – that of resourcing. The purpose of this chapter is to present the nexus between resourcing, community, and Buddhism. Resourcing is the immediate step that a prospective entrepreneur might take to proceed with his/her entrepreneurial intention. The analysis of data revealed two stages of resourcing – that of bricolage and assembly.

This chapter has six sections. Following the introduction, the second section explores participant commentaries on bricolage. Bricolage refers to improvisation, or "making do" by using whatever resources are available. The analysis of data suggested two forms of bricolage – that of material and labour bricolage. Resource constraints hindered the participants' entrepreneurial intention, so they compiled readily accessible resources as a starting point. Community involvement was only seen among the participants who engaged in labour bricolage. Community members enabled labour bricolage behaviour by contributing labour, knowledge, and skills.

Section Three focuses on the participant commentaries on assembly. Bricoleurs attempted to acquire further resources at this stage. The recurring themes of enablers and constraints indicated that close and distant community members enable and constrain resource assembly. There were two forms of enablers. *First*, community members directly assisted the participants' resource assembly by providing resources (i.e., direct role). *Second*, community

members indirectly assisted the participants by forming links with others to access resources (i.e., intermediary role). Section Four presents the findings on community constraints in resource assembly. Community members constrained participants resource assembly in three ways. Some participants expressed that community members were reluctant to offer finance, while others explained that the community members pressurised them to relocate their production facilities. Others perceived that community members discouraged their resource assembly.

Communities being both helpful and detrimental creates tension for the participants. Section Five focuses on the participants' religious upbringing to explain the role of Buddhism in managing the resulting stress. Tension, along with the other obstacles when assembling resources, is managed through a tenet of Buddhism – that of determination. Determination assists the participants to clarify what is necessary for enlightenment and focus upon it, and to eliminate whatever is in the way. It is a resolve to continue along the resourcing path of venture formation no matter what obstacles present themselves. Finally, Section Six summarises the nexus between resourcing, community, and Buddhism in an integrative framework.

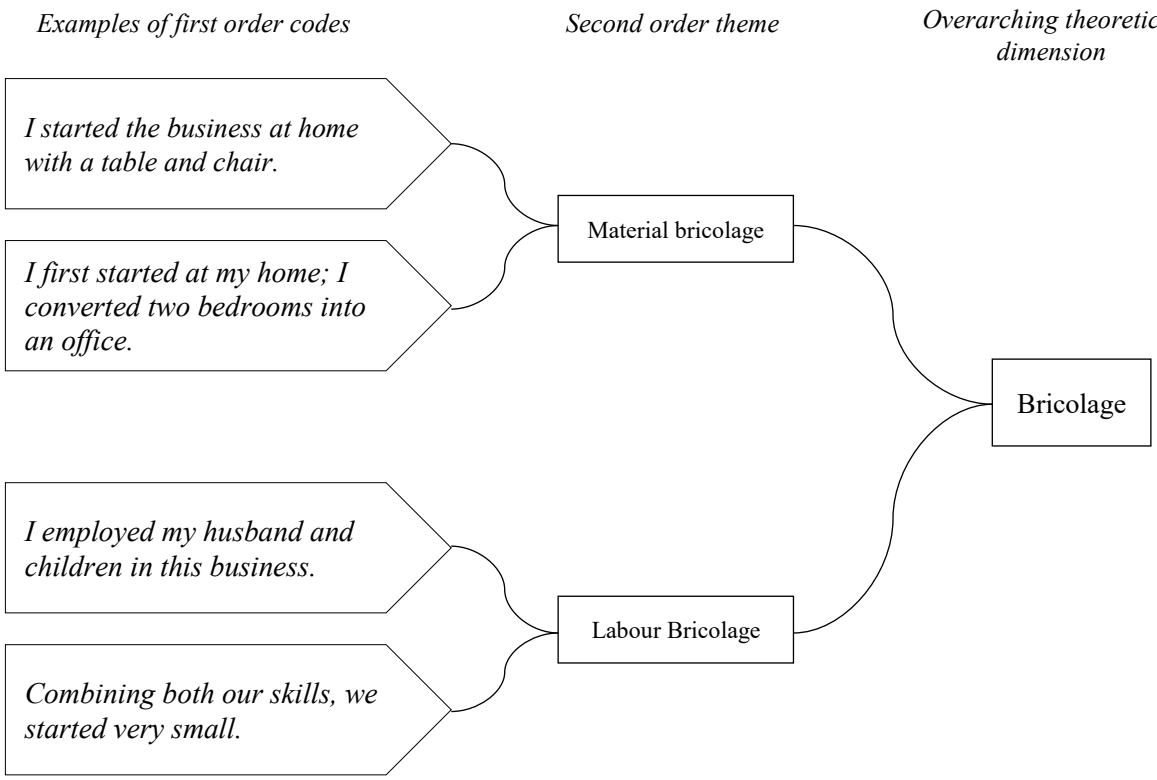
6.2 Bricolage

The participants' intentions to create their own ventures were constrained by resource limitations. At one point, the owner of the water-care company said that his objective of starting his own business was constrained by a lack of capital. As he explained: *although we had the intention of opening a company on our own, we did not have the necessary resources and did not have sufficient capital* (Participant R). Similarly, the chairman of a business conglomerate stated: *[w]hen I am thinking to start my business, I did not have the required financial and social capital, networking, infrastructure capacities, etc* (Participant G).

However, their determination to launch their own venture was not constrained by resource limitations. Rather, they attempted to make do by using the resources available (i.e., bricolage behaviour). As Senyard, Baker, and Steffens (2010) posit, bricoleurs do not wait for all the "right resources", they capitalise on the existing resources at hand. In this way, pursuing entrepreneurial intentions by engaging in bricolage behaviour to manage resource constraints seems to be a valid starting point.

Analysis of the data suggested two forms of bricolage behaviours – that of material bricolage and labour bricolage (see Figure 21 below). The former refers to the mobilisation of pre-existing materials. The latter refers to the mobilisation of one's own labour with that of other individuals, for example, friends, suppliers, relatives etc.

Figure 21: Bricolage data structure



Source: research data

6.2.1 Material Bricolage

Material bricolage is evident in many participant commentaries (Participants J, K, V, H, C, O, P, and R). These participants mobilised pre-existing materials (readily accessible resources such as a location, personal savings, and single application materials with new use) to advance their entrepreneurial intention. At one point, the owner of a software development company explained how he mobilised readily accessible resources to set up a home-based office.

> *I started the business at home with a table and chair but for about a year I did not have any business. It was a very difficult year for me with a lot of issues, but after about a year I started getting business.* (Participant J)

The chairman of a dairy product company recalled his material bricolage. He combined readily available and accessible resources at home and at school As he explained:

> *I started making ice packets. I used to make them at home and freeze them in our home freezer. Although I made these packets, I did not have a proper place to sell them, so I used my school canteen. At that time there wasn't a fridge in the school, so I transported the ice packets in a rigifoam box. I did this for a few days, and I was able to sell all my packets by 9 or 10 am.* (Participant K)

Selling his house was the only option available for the timber mill owner to proceed his entrepreneurial intention.

> *I was able to sell the house for more than what I expected, and I decided to invest those funds in a plot of land and start a timber mill. That was the only option left for me to chase my dream.* (Participant V)

The chairman of a premier software development company converted bedrooms into an office. Also, he used his own savings.

> *I first started at my home; I converted two bedrooms into an office. I did not have the capital, I had about Rs 10,000 [NZD 100 approximately] personal funds at that time and I decided to use it as the capital for the business.* (Participant H)

The chairman of a holding company revealed his use of easily accessible resources as the starting point for a business which is now the largest player in the Sri Lankan edible oil and fats industry. Selling rice was his first business initiative. He explains:

> *I bought a 200-litre barrel, cut it into two, processed the paddy into rice and started selling the rice. Also, I used a 35-bushel tank and experimented with a new innovation where paddy was steamed and made into rice.* (Participant C)

The refrigerator manufacturer, who lost his brother as a result of food poisoning recalled his material bricolage. He used his savings as a starting point:

> *…these words "food poisoning" seemed to be reverberating in my mind and as refrigeration was also connected to food I decided to manufacture something to resolve that problem. I then manufactured a deep freezer and a chiller which was my first innovation. So, once I returned from overseas where I was involved in refrigeration work, I had some money which I had saved up and with these funds I started on my innovation.* (Participant O)

The strawberry jam producer recalled the time she experimented making jam using readily accessible materials at home. Due to resource constraints, she was self-taught. As she said:

At that time there were a lot of issues, especially finance. So, I decided to teach myself. I started by reading the lists of ingredients on the product labels. I looked at the ingredients and experimented and started making jam using stuff [equipment] at home. (Participant P)

The owner of the water-care company shared his experience of converting his house to a home-based factory:

It was a two-storeyed house and one upstairs room, which I had meant to use as a library, was converted to an office. The ground floor served as the warehouse. We also started formulating chemicals for water treatment. We used various raw materials, blended them according to various formulas and produced water treatment chemicals. This was all done on the ground floor. The degree that I earned from the Chemical College helped me a lot. (Participant R)

In summary some participants (J, K, V, H, C, O, P, and R) used pre-existing materials available in their environment to further their entrepreneurial intention (see Figure 21 above). For example, as the owner of a software development company said; *[i] started the business at home with a table and chair but for about a year I did not have any business* (Participant J). Similarly, other participants (K, V, H, C, O, P, and R) used readily accessible resources such as their savings, barrels, a school canteen, regiform boxes, etc. For these participants, material bricolage served as a starting point to proceed their entrepreneurial intention.

6.2.2 Labour Bricolage

The second form of bricolage behaviour is labour bricolage (see Figure 21 above). Labour bricolage refers to the use of one's own labour with that of another or others.

Participants (P, B, N, A and R) accessed close (i.e., family) and distant (i.e., social) community members' labour, knowledge, and skills to further their entrepreneurial intentions.

In addition to the use of materials to hand (material bricolage), the strawberry jam producer recalled her attempts at labour bricolage:

> *In the very first days, I employed my husband and children in this business. Children used to stick the labels, wash the bottles and the strawberries, and help me in whatever way they could.* (Participant P)

The drop shipping business owner joined forces with a friend who had experience with drop shipping technology. It was the starting point of their venture. As he explained:

> *Kamal [Pseudonym - participant's friend] excelled in E-bay drop shipping methods and thereafter we both got together. I too learnt quite a bit about this from Kamal. Kamal was able to manage this on his own and I saw this as a good product that could be marketed as I had that skill of marketing a product. That is all we had. Combining both our skills, we started very small.* (Participant B)

The cane furniture manufacturer recalled an incident while he was employed at a bank. According to him, his entrepreneurial intention developed while he was employed as a banker. As he was not equipped with resources he decided to work with a cane furniture producer.

> *At that time, I was working at the Bank and this furniture guy used to constantly come to the Bank and grumble to me that his business was not doing well and that he needed a loan to develop his business. I told him that without an established business he will not be able to get a loan from the Bank, and I used to give him cash whenever he needed it. At this time, I intended to leave the Bank but needed something to do. I did not have*

all the resources required. I then got the idea of going into business with the furniture guy. I had a chat with him and learnt that there wasn't much cane furniture produced in Sri Lanka. Then we both started producing cane products. (Participant N)

The T-shirt manufacturer recalled how he combined his knowledge of logistics with his friend's knowledge as the starting point of the venture. At one point, he realised the importance of a website for a business. He asked a friend who knew about web design to join him.

From the Logistics course I followed I learnt about concepts like Just in Time, how to maintain a Zero Inventory, how to base a platform etc. So, I was able to make use of this knowledge to start the business. At this point I asked my friend who had knowledge of web designing to join me as I realised that the a website is very valuable. So, we took the first step for this business together. (Participant A)

Highlighting resource constraints, the owner of the water-care company explained that he partnered with his close friends at work to raise capital.

We [participant's close friends] encountered problems, and although we had the intention of opening a company on our own we did not have the necessary resources and did not have sufficient capital. So, we had to work to build this up. The best possible option we did was we got together, so we can fund our own money. The three of us decided to invest Rs 25,000 each. That was the only capital I had when I started my own company but I wanted to somehow continue with what I had started and this was a big challenge. (Participant R)

In summary, this data revealed that some participants (P, B, N, A and R) used labour bricolage (see Figure 21 above) to further their entrepreneurial intentions. The participants accessed close (i.e., family) and distant (i.e., social) community members' labour, knowledge,

and skills. Only one participant (participant P - the strawberry jam producer) mobilised close community members (family members) for labour bricolage. Others (Participants B, N, A and R) accessed labour, knowledge, and skills of distant community members such as friends.

The above participant commentaries on bricolage (material and labour) suggest that they tended to start their entrepreneurial journeys by mobilising resources they already possessed. For many of them, this was mainly due to resource constraints. As elaborated in the previous chapter, these were the entrepreneurs who had an orientation to form an entrepreneurial venture. Their desire to form a venture may have influenced them to gather readily accessible resources. Therefore, pursuing entrepreneurial intentions by engaging in bricolage behaviour even under resource constraints seems to be a valid starting point. In this way, bricolage becomes a stage of the entrepreneurial action process.

The influence of community members at the stage of bricolage can only be seen among the participants who engaged in labour bricolage. Close and distant community members enabled labour bricolage behaviour by contributing labour, knowledge, and skills. Labour, knowledge, and skills can be classified as human capital (Clough, Fang, Vissa, & Wu, 2019). In this way, community members assisted bricoleurs to generate human capital.

6.3 Resource Assembly

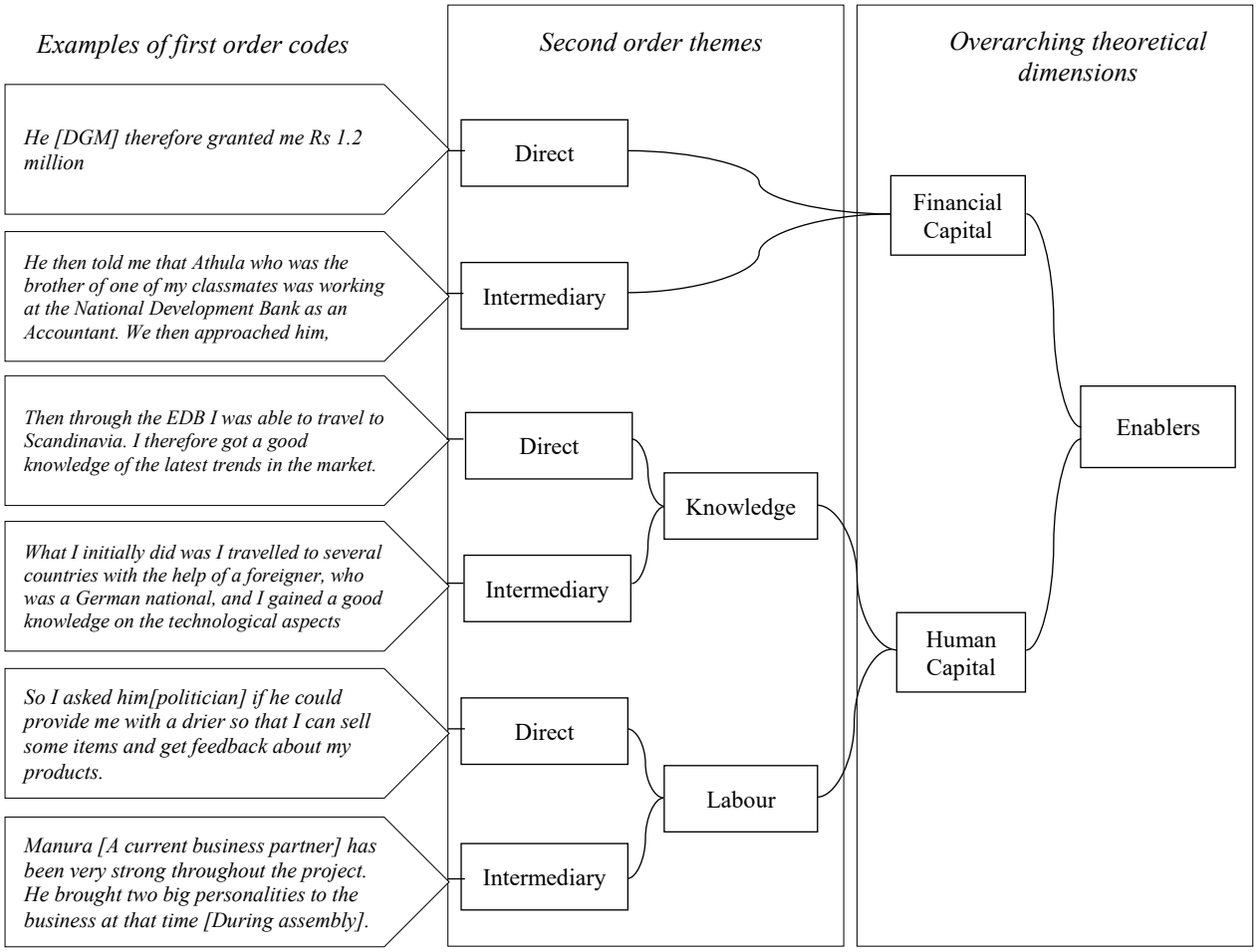
Analysis of the data suggested that the bricoleurs who tended to make do with the available resources at hand subsequently progressed to the second stage of resourcing – *resource assembly* - as they needed to acquire *further* resources. Resource assembly is a resource accumulation stage where the bricoleurs attempted to expand and strengthen their resource base before launching the business. The chairman of a high-tech company articulated his thoughts on assembling resources. Using an example of producing a jug, he described the gradual augmentation of further resources to complete the jug.

For example, take this jug [he explains pointing out a jug on the table]. You think of making a jug like this. If you try you can do it. Maybe you may not have the resources or the cash to do it. However, you start from somewhere [bricolage], and start acquiring all the resources you need. There should be a strong need within yourself. You will then find a place to do the plastic moulding, source glass suppliers, you will find out about the way the jug is moulded, how it is painted, and complete the product. (Participant F)

Ventures require tangible resources such as premises, materials, and equipment. However, entrepreneurs rarely generate all the required resources, especially at the early stage of venture formation. Analysis of the data suggested that participants' resource assembly was limited to financial (Participants C, N, O, & R) and human capital (Participants P, B, S, G, N, J, K, and O). For these participants, the minimum number of resources established a foundation for subsequent business launch.

Community members (distant) became further involved during this stage, *enabling* (see Figure 22 below) and *constraining* (explained in section 6.4 below) resource assembly. Community members enabled resource assembly in two ways. *First*, they directly assisted the participants' resource assembly by providing resources (i.e., a direct role). *Second*, community members indirectly assisted the participants by forming links with other another parties to access the resource (i.e., an intermediary role). This chapter continues to present participant commentaries on how community members enabled the assembly of financial and human capital.

Figure 22: Data structure of resource assembly



Source: Research data

Table 6: Direct and intermediary roles of community members in the resource assembly

Participants	Financial Capital		Human Capital			
			Knowledge		labour	
	Direct	Intermediary	Direct	Intermediary	Direct	Intermediary
O	*					
N	*					
C		*				
R		*				
P					*	
B					*	
S						*
G				*		
N			*	*		
B			*			
J			*			
O			*			

Source: Research data

6.3.1 Financial Capital

Financial capital includes cash, grants or loans (Clough et al., 2019) that are admissible to economic activity. The following commentaries show how direct and intermediary roles of community members enabled the assembly of financial capital (see Table 6 above).

The refrigerator manufacturer conducted several experiments at the assembly stage. Those experiments were all failures and resulted in him exhausting his funds. He recalled his experience with a Deputy General Manager (DGM) of a bank who helped him to finance the venture (i.e., direct role), and as a result, was able to continue his work.

> *I exhausted all my finances [due to experiments] so I had to request a bank loan. I asked for a loan of Rs 500,000 but the DGM of the bank at that time said that this amount was insufficient, and he approved a loan for Rs 1.2 million. He said that if I settled for Rs 500,000 I might get stuck without funds half-way, so he granted me Rs 1.2 million. I was very happy with this and continued with my manufacturing work.* (Participant O)

The cane furniture manufacturer recalled an incident when a community member directly assisted in with finance. As he explained:

> *I resigned from the Bank in February 1994 and in April the Export authority [Pseudonym] gave me an opportunity to attend an exhibition in Germany. At that exhibition I got a German partner, a lady, and she agreed to come to Sri Lanka and make an investment. It was a chance of a lifetime because very rarely do you get an opportunity like this at your first exhibition. So, I capitalised on this opportunity and managed to find funds for my venture.* (Participant N)

According to the chairman of a holding company, a friend introduced him to a funding agency.

> *I approached several banks for a loan. I was then about 17 or 18 years of age, so the banks did not take me seriously. At that time, I had a friend called Sisil [Pseudonym] who worked for the Authority for Industrial Development [Pseudonym]. I discussed my idea with him and asked him for advice on how to get a loan. He then told me that Pawan [Pseudonym], who was the brother of one of my classmates, was working at the National Development Bank [Pseudonym] as an Accountant. We then approached him, and he told us that they had started giving SMI loans, but these loans were for over 3 million and if we wanted a smaller loan we would have to approach the banks. I told him that I had already done so and then he recommended that we submit a project proposal. The Project Manager at that time was Mr Kamal [Pseudonym] who later went on to start ABC Inc [Pseudonym]. It was not an easy task because when we tried to get information for the project report, there was no one to give us proper information but finally we were able to put together a project report and with Alaml's [Pseudonym] help we were able to finance my venture.* (Participant C)

The owner of the water-care company shared his experience with a bank. A friend introduced him to the bank and the bank assisted him with finance for the venture (i.e., intermediary role).

> *I was introduced to the ACB Bank [Pseudonym] by a friend because he thought that I cannot run a business without a bank account. I am telling you this because it is a very significant incident. My friend introduced me to the ACB Bank [Pseudonym] and I opened a current account. After I got the bank account I was able to discipline myself financially. I did find some funds for my business too. I also vowed not to get indebted*

and that the money I earned from the business will be re-invested in the business and not used for other purposes. This was during the time I was getting ready for my business. (Participant R)

To conclude, the above participant commentaries illustrate community involvement in enabling financial resource assembly. Community members enabled financial resource assembly for two participants' (O and N) by exhibiting direct roles.

Two other participant commentaries (C and R) illustrate how intermediary roles of community members enabled their financial resource assembly. Thus, community members exhibited direct and intermediary roles in enabling participants to assemble financial capital. The following section presents the community involvement in enabling human capital.

6.3.2 Human Capital

In this research, human capital includes labour and knowledge (Clough et al., 2019) that are admissible to economic activity. Assembling labour and knowledge is considered necessary for a venture as they enhance productivity by offering people with the capacity to perform future value creation activities. The following commentaries show how direct and intermediary roles of community members enabled the assembly of human capital (see Table 6 above).

6.3.2.1 Labour

As mentioned earlier, the strawberry jam producer related her experience with a politician she met at an exhibition who helped her to hire a driver (i.e. a direct role)

Actually, although we always scold politicians, there are some good people too. At that time, the MP [A member of parliament] of Kandy was Mr Kamal [Pseudonym]. He

attended my exhibition and when he saw my products, he asked in what way he can help develop my business. So, I asked him if he could provide me with a driver so that I can sell some items and get feedback about my products. He immediately assisted me to hire a driver. Therefore, I still respect him for this. (Participant P)

The drop shipping business owner recalled the time he recruited an accountant by capitalising on a personal contact (i.e., a direct role).

At this [During assembly] time, I met Anu [Pseudonym]. He had a thorough knowledge of accounting, and he used to teach students who were preparing for Chartered accountancy examinations. I saw him as a role model. Then one day when I visited him, I asked him how the accounts needed to be done. I asked him because he was well versed in accounts and was a key figure in the business field. So that day we met we face- to-face and discussed my business concept. After listening to us Anu expressed a wish to join our company and asked us to decide and let him know. Anu had about 45 years' experience behind him. To gain that experience we would have to work for about 45 years, and it was better to get an experienced person rather than having to make mistakes and learn. So, I decided to take him in to the business to handle accounts. Now I realise it was a very wise decision. (Participant B)

One of the business partners of the owner of a career guidance agency introduced to two human resource people to the business and they now work as directors of the venture (i.e. intermediary role). As he explained:

A current business partner has been very strong throughout the project. He brought two big personalities to the business at that time [during assembly]. He introduced someone called Dinuka [Pseudonym], who is now working as one of our Directors and

who is seen as Sri Lanka's career guidance guru by the public. He has conducted more than 2000 seminars all around the country, and is a very famous personality in that area. Also, he [the business partner] introduced Colonel Namal [Pseudonym], he is a Director for Local Fisheries [Pseudonym], another highly achieving personality. So, we attracted some extremely talented people with proven testimonials. (Participant S)

6.3.2.2 Knowledge

The chairman of a business conglomerate shared his experience about the early days of his venture. A foreigner helped him to travel overseas and gather technical knowledge about the industry that he intended to enter (i.e., an intermediary role).

What I initially did was I travelled to several countries with the help of a foreigner, who was a German national, and I gained good knowledge on the technological aspects. In order to run a successful business, you need to know every aspect about the business. Now if you take a tyre – I will be able to tell you every single thing from the compound to how the tyre is made. If you take gas, I know every single thing about gas. If you ask me how lubricants are made, I can tell you the whole process. (Participant G)

The cane furniture manufacturer shared his views about knowledge acquisition through experience. A friend who worked at a retail chain gave him several orders that enabled him to learn about the sales process (i.e., a direct role).

I had a friend working at Singha [Pseudonym] and as I was trying things out by doing quite a bit of retail sales at this time [assembly], he told me that they intended to open a retail chain and asked if I would be able to supply these stores. From then on he gave me plenty of orders and I was able to learn a lot of things from it. (Participant N)

He further recalled his experience with an export development authority which assisted him to visit IKEA factories and labs in Sweden which helped him to identify the latest market trends (i.e., an intermediary role). As he recalled:

> *Overall, the designs in Sri Lanka are traditional, designs which have descended down from the foreigners. But I was able to get some latest designs from my overseas trip. In Europe there are good designers, specifically furniture designers, and I was able to get some ideas and designs from them. Then through the export development authority [Pseudonym] I was able to travel to Scandinavia – that is to Sweden and in Sweden the leading furniture supplier is IKEA. I got the opportunity to visit IKEA factories and labs. I therefore got a good knowledge of the latest trends in the market.* (Participant N)

The drop shipping business owner recalled his experience of a parallel business – that of trading T-shirts online. He connected with a factory owner and gained experience (i.e., a direct role).

> *I did not have anything, not even a factory but I started to do some experiments. I opened the web page and waited to get some business. While waiting for opportunities I added .lk to FashionT'shirt [Pseudonym] and when I checked the domain it was available. I then immediately purchased the domain and made a webpage called FashionT'shirt.lk [Pseudonym] but still I did not have any business. I had nothing to print, sell and try out. Subsequently I started getting small orders from a guy. I linked up with that guy, also he owned a factory. It was a great help, I started doing some experiments with the domain FashionT'shirt.lk. I gained a lot of experience that way. I still work with him.* (Participant B)

The owner of a software development company recalled the time he tried to approach foreign companies to obtain an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) licence. None of those attempts were successful, but he did meet a person who helped him to obtain a licence. That licence assisted him to gain knowledge and develop the business over time (i.e., a direct role).

> *I wrote to a Singaporean company, but I got rejected. I then wrote to a US company but that is usually diverted through Singapore. The Singaporean partner put me on to the South African Sege AccPac office [Pseudonym]. They in turn contacted me and said that they had a problem in the South African region, as they did not have experienced people to promote the product. They recognised my experience of fifteen years [professional experience] and said that they could not give me a partnership because that would mean a large investment, but I could go there and work as a partner. They would give me a good salary but it would not be a partnership. To make an investment I must get staff etc which I could not do. I was just getting into business. I only knew about the Sri Lankan market and the product. So, I declined. At this point the guy at the South African office said that he can give me a local licence but that he will not be able to sell to me as he works in the main office, but he will put me in touch with one of their partners. He then personally spoke to the partner and got me the licence. I learnt a lot with this licence, and I was able to continue with this business for about a year and a half.* (Participant J)

According to the refrigerator manufacturer, the instructor of the Advanced Diploma course he followed gave him useful knowledge about planning and structuring the venture (i.e., a direct role). As he mentioned:

> *After completing the basic Diploma course, I enrolled for the Advanced Diploma course as well. While doing this I drew up a business plan. I drew up a structure with*

different departments like finance, production, marketing, drew up an organisational chart, included some activities and goals. I must mention here that the Instructor at Excellence University [Pseudonym] was very helpful and I developed rapidly. (Participant O)

To conclude, the above participant commentaries show the direct and intermediary roles of community members in enabling human capital. Exhibiting direct roles, community members enabled labour for two participants (P and B). Exhibiting intermediary roles, community members enabled labour for only one participant (S). This is evident in the commentary of the owner of a career guidance agency, where he explained how one of his business partners who are now working as directors of the venture.

Data further suggested that community members enabled participants' knowledge assembly. Notably, the commentary of the cane furniture manufacturer (participant N) showed that community members had played both direct and intermediary roles in enabling the participant's knowledge assembly.

In summary, the above findings on financial and human capital assembly can be classified into three categories. *First*, community members primarily contributed to participants' resource assembly in two ways. Some community members enabled resources by direct assistance (i.e., direct role), while others indirectly enabled links with other parties to access resource (i.e. intermediary role). These participants are wealth-constrained individuals who could not assemble resources by simply paying for them. Consequently, they relied on community members to make links and connections to assemble resources. In this way, assembling resources through community members can be considered a strategy for resource-constrained entrepreneurs to move forward.

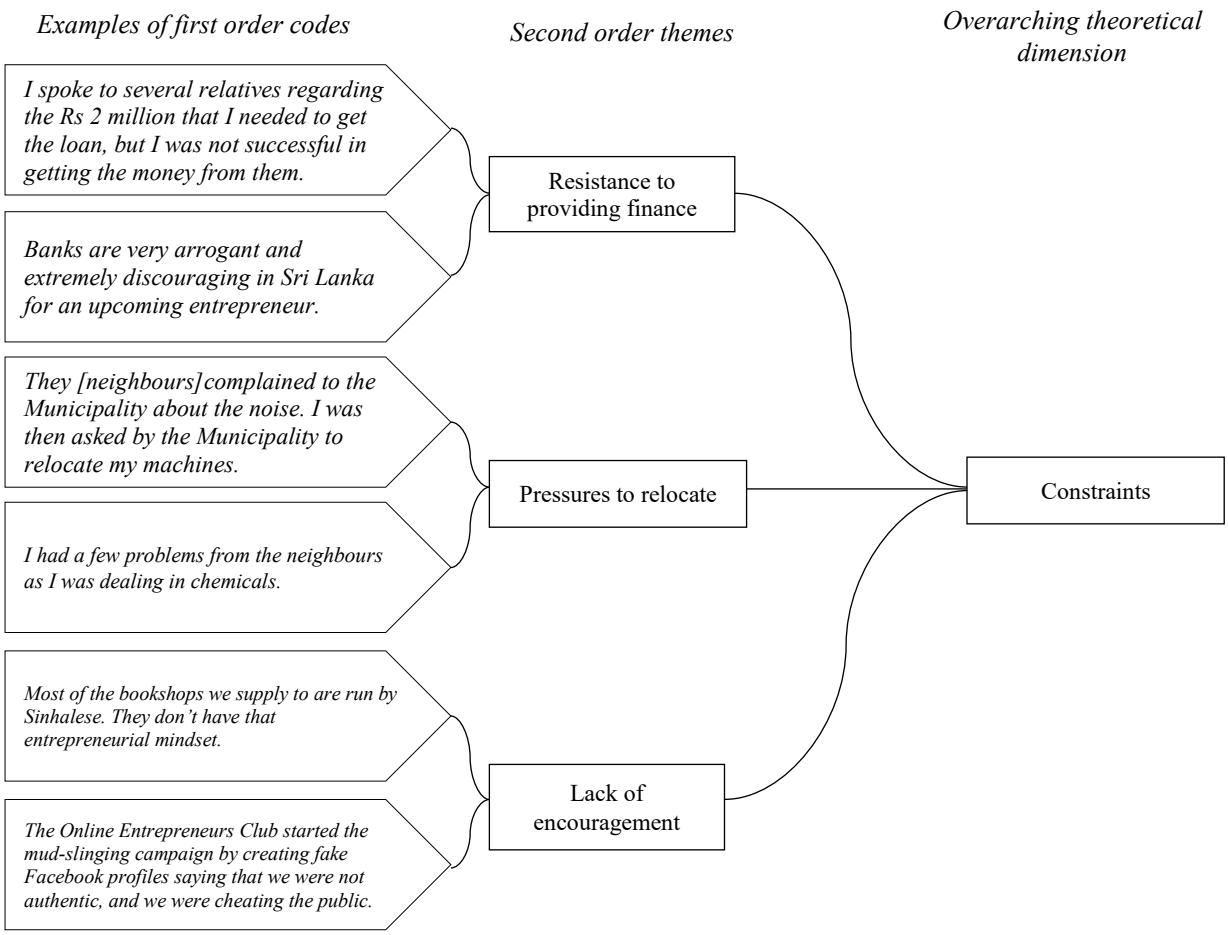
Second, all participants accessed and assembled resources through distant community members – that of the members who are outside the family unit. Close community members' (family members) assistance was not evident in the commentaries during this stage of assembly.

Third, during the assembly stage, participants engaged in a resource accumulation phase to augment further resources. For example, the strawberry jam producer (Participant P) who experimented by making jam at home using the readily accessible materials (material bricolage) augmented labour through a distant community member (politician) at the assembly stage. As such, mobilising community members to access and augment further resources is a salient factor that is evident in the bricoleur participants.

6.4 Community Constraints

Despite providing some assistance (see section 6.3 above) with resource assembly, community members were also the source of constraints. Analysis of the data suggested three forms of constraints (see Figure 23 below). Some participants (C, H, and U) reported that community members refused to offer them finance. Others (P and R) claimed that community members pressured them to relocate their production facilities, while participants B and U stated that community members discouraged their resource assembly. These community constraints are discussed below.

Figure 23: Data structure of tensions of community conduits



Source: Research data

6.4.1 Resistance to Providing Finance

The chairman of a holding company encountered resistance from relatives when he asked for financial capital to form the venture. His relatives were reluctant to finance his venture due to his lack of a proven record as a successful entrepreneur.

> *I spoke to several relatives regarding the Rs 2 million that I needed to get the loan, but I was not successful in getting the money from them. They didn't give me finance. They were pretty scared to finance me as I am so new.* (Participant C)

He shared another incident where he experienced community resistance when he was the secretary of a networking association. During that time, along with the committee members, he had submitted a grant proposal to the Sri Lankan Coconut Development Authority. The members did not support the proposal due to their assumption that he would control the project.

> *I called an emergency meeting and in 36 hours I got the Articles of Association drawn up, inserted a paper advertisement calling for contributors and started explaining to potential contributors about what we planned to do. The majority of these people feared that it might be a dictatorship, so people dropped out citing various excuses. I was therefore unable to proceed with this exercise.* (Participant C)

The chairman of a software development company shared his experience with the banking sector in Sri Lanka.

> *There were several challenges initially because we were trying to tie up with banks for internet payments. Banks belong to a very conservative market and they were apprehensive about adopting this as they deal with customers' money. I don't know why banks do not support novel concepts.* (Participant H)

The bag producer shared a similar perception of Sri Lankan banks.

> *Banks are very arrogant and extremely discouraging in Sri Lanka for an upcoming entrepreneur, extremely discouraging. Banks lean over backwards to assist established ones.* (Participant U)

6.4.2 Pressures to Relocate

The strawberry jam producer encountered difficulties when she started to experiment with her products at home. The neighbours complained to the Municipal Council about the noise, and finally, the Council asked her to relocate her machines.

> *There is always a bit of jealousy and my neighbours started complaining that the boilers were making a lot of noise and inconveniencing them. I had plenty of space in my home to house this equipment, but they complained to the Municipality about the noise. I was then asked by the Municipality to relocate my machines.* (Participant P)

The owner of the water-care company shared the experience with his family and neighbours that led him to relocate his assembled resources. As his business involved chemicals, he decided to relocate his warehouse. This decision was taken for the safety of his child, other household members, and neighbours. His neighbours also complained to several authorities regarding his use of chemicals. This was a stressful time, and he needed to develop a long-term strategy to deal with these issues.

> *By this time, I had a little baby and I realised that keeping chemicals in the house was not good for the residents or the neighbours so I re-located the warehouse but maintained the office at home. As this was a residential area I had a few problems with the neighbours as I was dealing in chemicals. I moved my warehouse activities from the Wijerama rented place to the new location. I had various problems, the neighbours complained, and I had the Police and officials from the Central Environmental Authority and the Municipality visiting me. There was a lot of pressure from these people which made me realise that I need a long-term strategy to solve this problem.* (Participant R)

6.4.3 Lack of Encouragement

The bag producer recalled his experience with Sinhala bookshop owners. According to him, Sinhala buyers had resisted forming contracts with him to purchase the product he proposed – transparent school bags[10].

> *Most of the bookshops we supply to are run by Sinhalese. They don't have that entrepreneurial mindset. They don't think that at this time transparent bags will be in demand. They denied our contracts. In my opinion, this type of stereotyped mindset really discourages upcoming entrepreneurs.* (Participant U)

He further added his experience with established companies.

> *I used to go for training to MIS Holdings [Pseudonym] and I used to take the opportunity to promote my products to these places, but big companies refused to give us business unless we were registered as a private limited company.* (Participant U)

The drop shipping business owner shared his experience of harassment by competitors.

> *The Online Entrepreneurs Club started the mud-slinging campaign by creating fake Facebook profiles saying that we were not authentic, and we were cheating the public. I had no intention to hurt anyone, it really got me down. However, we did not retaliate to these accusations, so they started mentioning my name and made further accusations. It went on for a while.* (Participant B)

To conclude, this data demonstrated that resource assembly is subject to constraints imposed by the community members such as relatives, neighbours, banks, clubs, and concerned

[10] He intended to sell transparent school bags as a result of to the security conditions imposed after the Easter bombings by Islamic terrorists.

authorities etc. It is evident from the commentaries that some participants (C, H, and U) experienced community members resistance to providing finance. This resistance can be attributed to the newness of the firm, and a lack of a proven track record, credibility, and success (Djupdal & Westhead, 2015). These factors may have discouraged community members from offering finance. The internal resources of these upcoming entrepreneurs may be difficult for community members to understand and value.

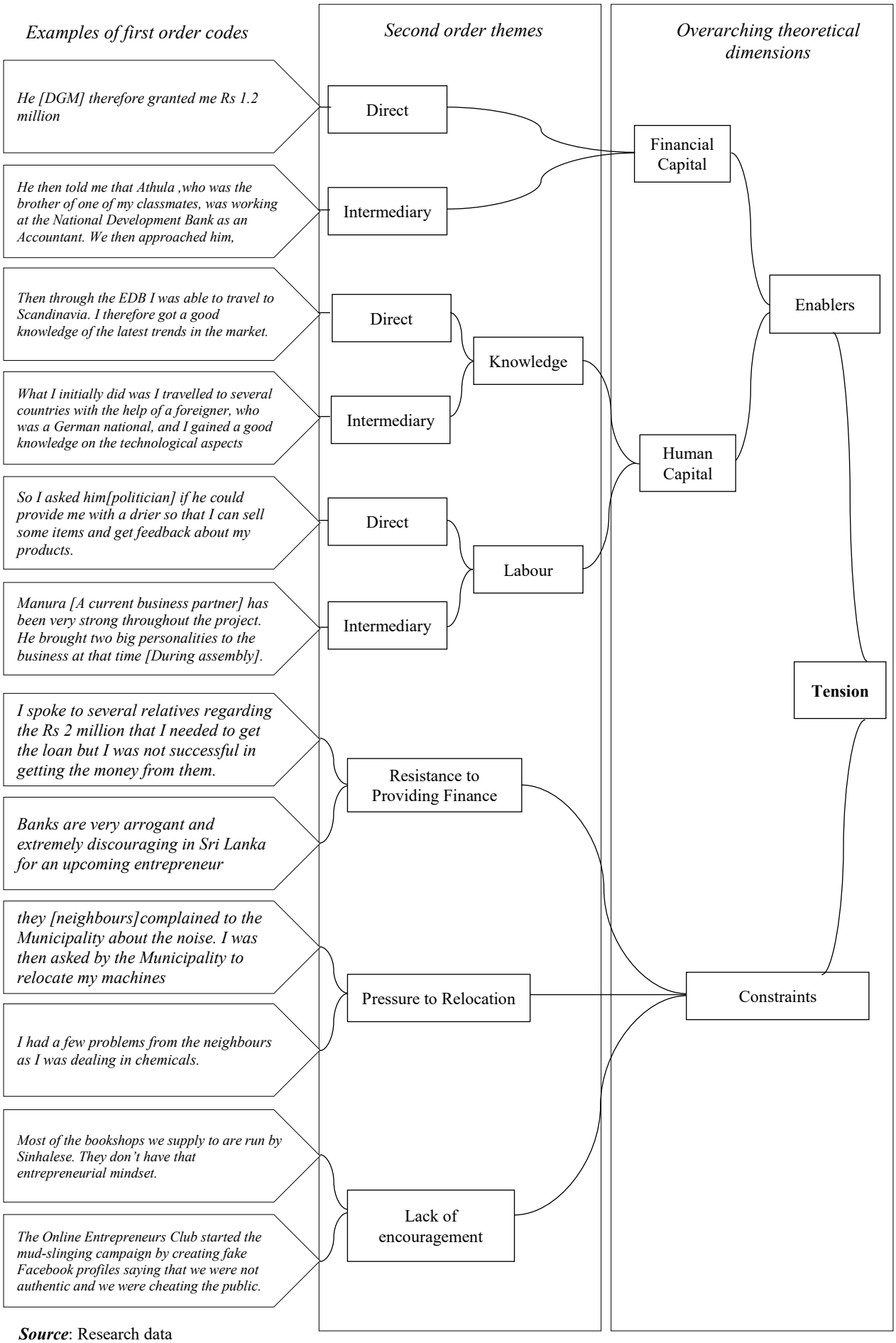
Other commentaries (P and R) showed that community members pressurised participants to relocate their production facilities. Noise generated through machines, jealousy, and inconveniencing the neighbours were the reasons behind the pressure.

Other participants (B and U) perceived that community members discouraged their resource assembly by not seeing opportunities (bookshop owners) or making false accusations (competitors).

Thus, Sections 6.3 and 6.4 detailed how communities enabled and constrained participants' resource assembly. Some community members enabled resources by direct assistance (i.e., direct role), while others indirectly enabled links with other parties to access resource (i.e., intermediary role). Despite the assistance (Section 6.3) in enabling resources, community members have constrained (Section 6.4) resource assembly as well.

Communities being both helpful and detrimental to resource assembly creates tension for participants. (see Figure 24 below). Nonetheless, their Buddhist upbringing seems helpful in managing that tension. Analysis of data suggested that the quality of being determined (i.e., determination) assisted participants to overcome the tensions during the assembly stage. The chapter continues to elaborate on these findings.

Figure 24: Data Structure of Community Tensions



Source: Research data

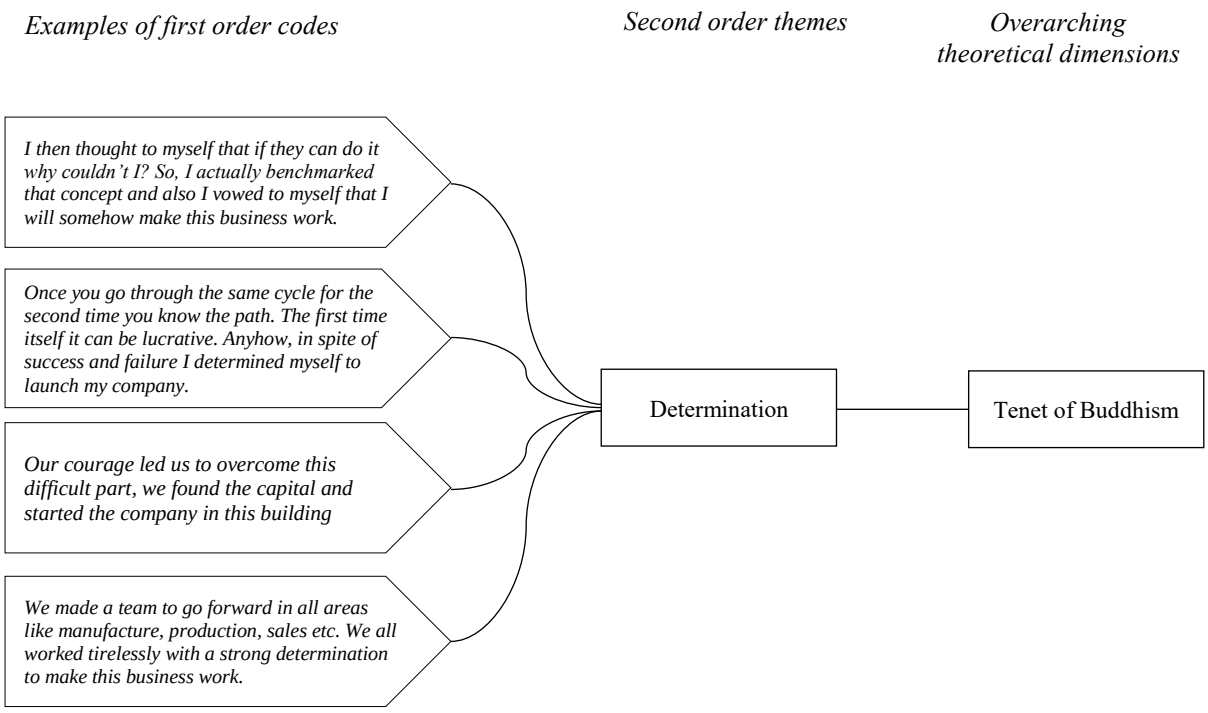
6.5 Tenets of Buddhism

6.5.1 Determination

The extent to which the participants manage tensions determines the success of the resourcing phase. As mentioned above, participants endeavour to manage these tensions through a tenet - that of *determination* of Buddhism. As explained in Chapter 2, determination (adhiṭṭhāna) is one of the perfections (*parami*, Pali; *paramita*, Sanskrit) originated from Buddhahood. Determination assists one to clarify what is necessary for enlightenment and focus upon it, and to eliminate whatever is in the way. It is a resolve to continue along the path no matter what obstacles present themselves. At one point, the refrigerator manufacturer said: *[i]f we do something with determination and dedication we can never go wrong* (Participant O). According to the chairman of a holding company, an entrepreneur is the one who gathers relevant resources and manages them. He stated that determined action to overcome resourcing barriers is a salient factor in his definition of an entrepreneur. As he explained, *[a] person who can gather all resources and manage them well can be classified as an entrepreneur. While managing these resources, you may face challenges and dangerous situations. A person who has the ability and courage to face these challenges and take necessary action can be classified as a perfect entrepreneur* (Participant C).

Analysis of the data suggested that determination assisted several participants (R, U, F, S, B, I, and K) to overcome the tensions imposed by community members during the resource assembly stage (see Figure 25 below). They managed the tensions imposed by the community conduits by deterministic acts.

Figure 25: Data Structure of Determination



Source: Research data

As noted above, the owner of the water care company explained that when neighbours started to complain about his use of chemicals, he decided to move his warehouse to a separate location while maintaining his office at home. However, his comments show that his determination led him to take various actions to overcome this constraint. As he explained:

> *I realised that I should not have this facility in a residential area, and I started looking for land in the Industrial Zone. Although I lived in Thalawathugoda [a suburb of Colombo, Sri Lanka], the plot of land I got was in the Industrial Zone in Homagama [a city of southeast of Colombo, Sri Lanka]. This was an ideal plot, but I did not have the money to buy this land. I then spoke to the authorities and arranged to pay in part-payments. This was possible as the land was owned by the LDA [Pseudonym -Local Development Authority] and within the time it took to transfer the deed from the LDA to my name, I was able to pay the entire amount and also put up a building. That was*

in 2012. This was a fairly large building, so I was able to set up my warehouse, office, lab all in one location. Even though this is a big task at that time, I had the willpower to do it. (Participant R)

The bag producer explained that established companies refused to buy his products as his business was not registered at the time. This led him to register the company and he then gradually took other actions. As he explained:

This [the refusal to buy his products from established companies] got me down. But I decided to organise my company anyhow and get it registered so that I can approach these big companies. I realised that we needed a place of our own so that we can have our own control. We were looking out for a factory to rent. We had a small house at IDH which we were thinking of selling but although we tried to sell this since the beginning of 2018 we did not get the price we expected so we decided to convert that house into a small factory. So last year in August/September if I remember right, we moved to this factory. We had previously used rented machinery because although we employed sewing ladies in the area, as the demand increased we had to employ outside people as well so therefore we had to rent machines. Likewise, I organised the company and got it registered. If you think, you can do anything. (Participant U)

Analysis of the data further suggested that determination assisted several participants (F, R, S, B, I, and K) to resolve issues that they encountered during the resource assembly stage. For example, for the chairman of a high-tech company, the lord Buddha played a symbolic role for him to articulate determination in his resourcing activity. According to him, one should work on an idea and translate those ideas into businesses. To do so, one's determination is indispensable. He stated that his keen sense of determination led him to overcome issues of assembly and develop a successful entrepreneurial venture.

For example, when Lord Buddha preaches, some people become enlightened and some even give up their lay lives and join the priesthood. There are also some others who don't feel anything at all. Similarly, when you look at a product ,some people don't get any ideas about it. Some people may get some idea but not do anything about it while, others will go that extra mile and try to convert that into a business. So, it's not easy but I think to do that a person needs to have a strong determination to accomplish.. In fact, those days [resourcing period] were a huge hassle for me. There were a lot of issues to overcome. My strong sense of perseverance brought the company this far. (Participant F)

The owner of the water-care company recalled the time that he vowed to himself to develop his venture. He started doing this by benchmarking some other companies. As he explained:

Our chemical suppliers were mostly located in First Street, Pettah [Pseudonym]. Most of these companies were run by Tamils and they operated their business in a very simple way. They didn't have big offices or showrooms fitted with air-conditioners, didn't have managers, but their businesses were valued in the millions. They had plenty of materials which could be purchased at any time. So, I used these companies as a benchmark. (Participant R)

Then, he started to examine the structures of the benchmarked businesses. He examined their working practices such as opening hours, rituals, and business transaction modes. Despite working capital issues, he was determined to create a methodical business and operate it in a way that the company would be perceived as a trusted entity. As he explained:

I examined how they were structured. They usually open their shops as early as 5.30 am, they start by sprinkling water mixed with saffron, light the lamp and worship their God. Their business is mostly on a cash basis, their credit transactions are only with their good customers, and they have been in business for as long as fifty to sixty years and are still successful. I then thought to myself, that if they can do it, why couldn't I? So, I actually benchmarked that concept and also I vowed to myself that I will somehow make this business work. At this time, I did not have much working capital and neither did I have a bank account, but I had several customers who I was servicing on a cash basis. I had two aims in life: one was to run a methodical business and the second was to maintain the company in such a way that it will always have good reviews and not receive adverse comments from anyone. I think I did it. (Participant R)

The owner of a career guidance agency explained his experience of resourcing the venture. He understood this stage as the structuring phase of the venture. Despite success and failure, he was determined to launch his company. As he explained:

I went through successes and failures during this time [resourcing of the venture]. I didn't know how to structure my venture. However, I knew it will be possible to do. Once you go through the same cycle for the second time you know the path. The first time itself it can be lucrative. Anyhow, despite success and failure I was determined to launch my company. (Participant S)

As mentioned above, actions by competitors had a massive effect on the drop shipping business owner during the resourcing phase. However, he explained how he overcame this tension by courage, and by concentrating on the core operations of the business.

There will be more threats of this nature [mud-slinging campaigns] and these should be ignored. We just continued doing our work with all our courage. Our courage led us to overcome this difficult part, we found the capital and started the company in this building. We got the lease, did the partitioning, got the furniture from Alpha [Pseudonym] because we wanted to have quality stuff. Even these tables were custom made for us. This was a novel thing for us. (Participant B)

Similarly, the chairman of a business conglomerate stated that his courage has contributed to his present success. Improving his business was his sole motive. As he explained:

I have a lot of courage and I think that this courage has contributed to my success today. I don't worry about anything. I did not even blame anyone, but I did what I thought was right and kept improving my business. That's the way I launched this business. (Participant I)

The chairman of a dairy product company recalled his early days of resourcing. Due to labour constraints, he created a team with multitasking capabilities in areas such as manufacturing, production, sales etc. He mentioned that he worked with a determined team that analysed all the opportunities available.

We made a team to go forward in all areas like manufacturing, production, sales etc. We all worked tirelessly with a strong determination to make this business work. As I mentioned before, we need to identify what are the opportunities we have. Can we go and sell our products to those shops? How do we capture these shops? What are the barriers we face? What are the opportunities we have? So, we need to analyse these together with our team at full capacity. (Participant K)

In summary, this data revealed that determination assisted the participants to resolve the tensions imposed during the resource assembly stage. Determination was a tenet that helped the entrepreneurs to continue along the resourcing phase no matter what obstacles, ambiguities, or uncertainties presented themselves.

Viewing determination as a quality that enhances one's endurance seems to be an essential point, given the fact that entrepreneurial environment in Sri Lanka is highly volatile. For example, commenting on his perception of banks in Sri Lanka, the Bag producer said, *[b]anks are very arrogant and extremely discouraging in Sri Lanka for an upcoming entrepreneur, extremely discouraging. Banks bend over backwards to assist established ones* (Participant U). However, strong determination allowed almost all the entrepreneurs to continually look towards the future despite the volatilities of the environment. In this way, determination is a dynamic and evolving factor through which entrepreneurs learn new ways and means of doing things.

6.6 The Integrative Framework

This chapter set out to present the findings of the second phase of entrepreneurial action – that of resourcing. The nexus between resourcing, community and Buddhism was presented. In this section, these findings are integrated to a model (see Figure 26 below).

Resourcing is the intermediate step that a prospective entrepreneur might take to proceed along with his/her entrepreneurial intention. The process of resourcing entails two stages, namely, bricolage and assembly. Bricolage is making do by applying combinations of resources at hand. Entrepreneurial intention constrained by resource limitations influences participants to compile readily accessible resources and use them as an entry point. As Senyard et al. (2010) understood, bricoleurs do not wait for all the "right resources", they make the most of the existing resources to hand. Therefore, pursuing entrepreneurial intentions by engaging

in bricolage behaviour, even under resource constraints, seems to be a valid starting point. Community members were only starting to connect with entrepreneurs who engaged in labour bricolage. Labour bricoleurs mobilise their own labour with that of other readily accessible individuals. Community members enabled labour bricolage behaviour by contributing labour, knowledge, and skills (i.e., human capital).

However, it is essential to understand that the urge stimulated by entrepreneurial intention to engage in bricolage behaviour is a biased action to overcome obstacles in venture formation, which may have positive and negative implications. As Stevenson (1999) understood, resource-constrained newly-created firms show substantially more innovative behaviour than other similarly placed firms. However, Ciborra (1996) writes, unpredictable outcomes and messiness are often a result of bricolage, even it works well. Still, bricolage appears to be an appropriate strategy for entrepreneurs "to get things done" in resource-constrained environments.

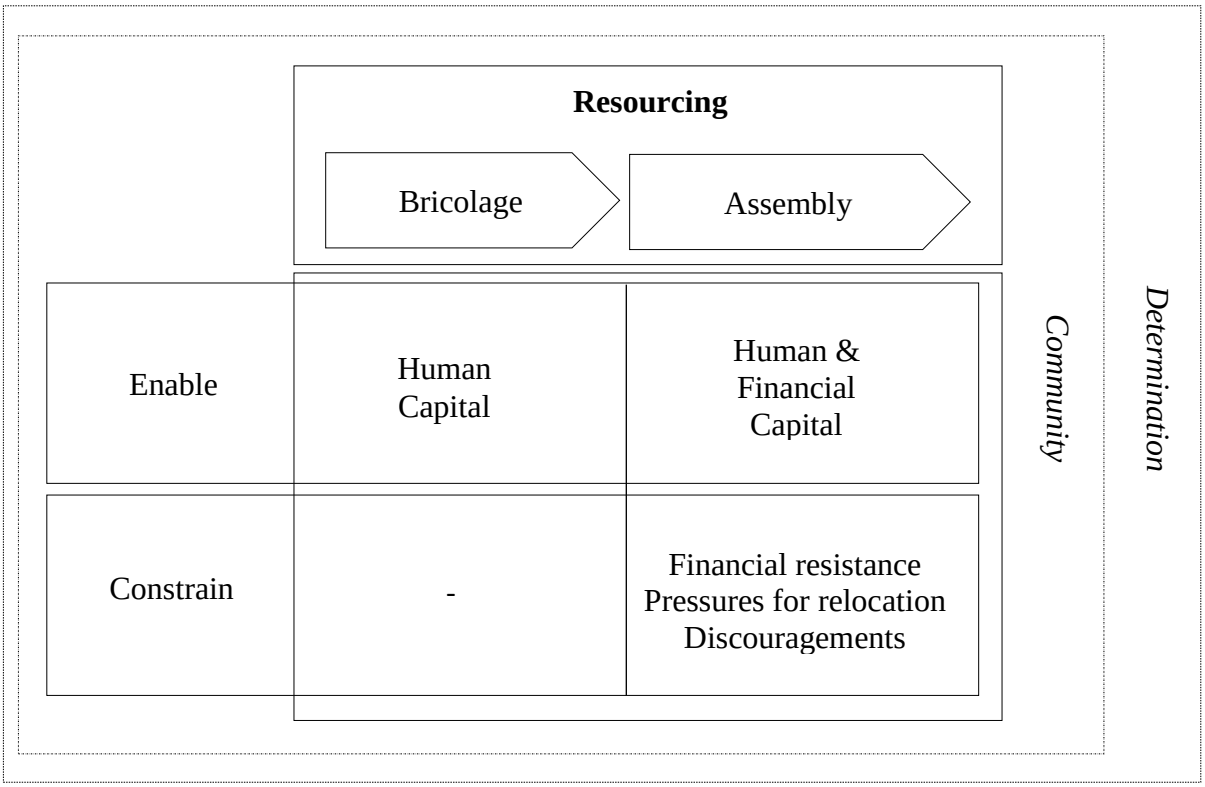
Bricoleurs who make do with available resources to hand subsequently progress to the second stage of resource assembly – expanding the resource base with financial and human capital. Financial capital includes cash, grants, or loans (Clough et al., 2019) that contribute to economic activity. Human capital includes labour and knowledge (Clough et al., 2019) that contribute to economic activity. Resource assembly is a resource augmentation stage where the entrepreneurs attempt to strengthen the resource base of the emergent venture.

Community members (close and distant) became further involved during this stage *enabling* and *constraining* resource assembly. Community members enable resource assembly in two ways. *First*, they directly assisted the participants resource assembly by providing resources (i.e., direct role). *Second*, community members indirectly assisted the participants by forming a link with other another parties to access resources (i.e., intermediary role).

Community members constrain resource assembly in three ways by imposing tensions on the process. The constraints include resistance to providing finance, pressure for relocation, and a lack of encouragement. As Ruef, Aldrich, and Carter (2003) postulate, an entrepreneur's resource mobilisation can be constrained by their neighbourhood and the personal background they inherited. The community members' reluctance to offer finance can be attributed to the "newness" of the firm. A lack of a proven track record, credibility and success are the main reasons for the liability of newness (Djupdal & Westhead, 2015). According to Djupdal and Westhead (2015), young firms can overcome these liabilities by attracting legitimacy. One way of doing this is by addressing the barriers of information asymmetry perceived by outside resources providers (Villanueva, Van de Ven, & Sapienza, 2012).

Communities being both helpful and detrimental creates tension as the participants proceed with their resource assembly. The tensions are managed through a tenet - that of *determination* of Buddhism. Determination assists one to clarify what is necessary for enlightenment and focus upon it, and to eliminate whatever is in the way. It is a resolve to continue along the path no matter what obstacles present themselves. In the literature, determination is recognised as an important trait for success. In their work, Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007) defined determined individuals as "gritty individuals" who work hard, and who persevere despite challenges. Determination allows entrepreneurs to continually assemble resources despite tensions from the communities. In this way, determination is a dynamic and evolving facet through which entrepreneurs learn new ways and means of doing things.

Figure 26: Integrative Framework of Resourcing



Source: Research data

Chapter Seven

Community Vitality

7.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the previous two chapters (that detailed findings on the first phase of entrepreneurial action – entrepreneurial intention and resourcing) to discuss the last phase of entrepreneurial action – that of community vitalities. The last phase of entrepreneurial action equates to the post-launch stage of the venture where the entrepreneur makes positive contributions to improve the vitality of communities. The vitality of a community refers to community's ability to sustain itself. This surprising finding identifies the impact on community vitality as a significant outcome of entrepreneurial action in the post-launch phase. According to the findings, entrepreneurial action particularly impacted on the communities as those actions were informed by Buddhism.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections. Following the introduction, the second section presents the findings on community vitality. Analysis of the data suggested that making positive contributions to improve community vitality was an objective during the post-launch phase of the venture. These goals were then translated into different altruistic acts raising the economic, social, and natural environmental vitality of communities. The economic vitality of a community refers to its members' personal financial position. Social vitality concerns the lifestyle of community members. Natural environmental vitality refers to the wellbeing of the natural environment where the community is situated.

The third section focuses on the participants' religious upbringing to explain how Buddhism influenced the participants to make positive contributions to improve community

vitality. Finally, the chapter concludes with Section Four. It summarises the nexus between community vitality and Buddhism in an integrative framework.

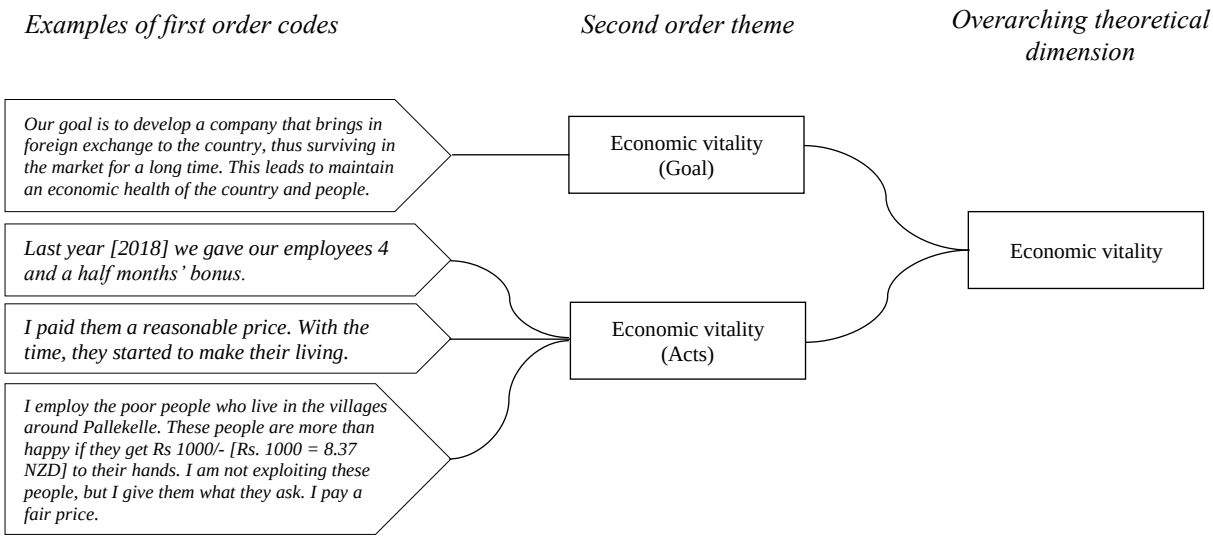
7.2 Community Vitality

According to participant commentaries, making positive contributions to benefit communities was an important objective during the post-launch phase of the venture. Analysis of the data suggested that serving communities offers excellent potential for improving their economic, social, and natural environmental vitality. Community vitality is a significant concern at present as it determines the ability of a community to sustain itself.

7.2.1 Economic Vitality

The *first* facet that emerged from the data was economic vitality (see Figure 27 below). The economic vitality of a community refers to its members' personal financial position. An individual's financial position is determined by his/her income from employment, investments in trading assets such as stocks and bonds, and the economic condition of the country.

Figure 27: Data structure of Economic Vitality



Source: Research data

Participant commentaries showed that they had a *goal* to improve the economic vitality of communities. For example, the owner of a computer software engineering company mentioned his goal of developing a sustainable company that generates foreign exchange. As he said:

> *Our current focus is on building a company which would be important and useful to the country. Our goal is to develop a company that brings in foreign exchange to the country, thus surviving in the market for a long time. This helps to maintain the economic health of the country and people.* (Participant D)

The chairman of a premier software development company expressed his view of being responsible to all stakeholders. He emphasised his business's responsibility to help society by spending money.

> *An entrepreneur's responsibility is to not only think about himself but also his stakeholders such as suppliers, partners, and everyone who comes into contact during the course of business activities. There is also a responsibility towards society, to spend some money for the betterment of the society.* (Participant H)

These goals of enhancing the economic vitality of communities are translated into different altruistic *acts* during post-launch. Participants had implemented several initiatives to improve the economic conditions of community members. For instance, the chairman of a holding company expressed how he improved the economic conditions of farmers by improving their financial health. As he explained:

> *I found out that our village farmers were facing a problem: they used to borrow from businessmen and when they were unable to settle their loans, the businessmen did not pay them for the paddy supplied. These businessmen even did not pay them a fair price.*

The farmers also purchased provisions on credit, running up big balances that they were sometimes unable to pay. I was able to change this situation by talking to the farmers and getting them to supply their paddy to me. I paid them a reasonable price. With time, they started to make a reasonable living. (Participant C)

The chairman of a real estate development company expressed how he improved the economic wellbeing of his employees by paying a bonus.

We have won the Great Place to Work award continuously for four years. Last year [2018] we gave our employees 4 and a half months' bonus. What other company gives bonuses like this? Even big companies like ABT [Pseudonym] and ATY [Pseudonym] have not rewarded their employees properly. Our finance company was running at a loss but still we gave the employees a bonus. (Participant E)

The owner of a software development company explained how his company helped another company that was struggling financially.

We were liaising with India to get SAP [An enterprise resource planning program] down but halfway during the discussions the customer realised that they could not afford it. We did not want to stop this halfway because it will be a failure on our part. The customer then decided to go for B1 [Business One] software which we promoted but they could not afford it either. Therefore we gave them a free licence and implemented the project on their behalf. We bore the cost of this licence and did it for the company because they were struggling financially. Currently they are our best referral because the project which nearly failed was made a success. (Participant J)

The cane manufacturer explained how he financially assists people who live in the villages around Pallekele (a suburb of the city of Kandy, Sri Lanka).

I employ the poor people who live in the villages around Pallekelle. These people are more than happy if they get Rs 1000/- [Rs. 1000 = 8.37 NZD] to their hands. I do not exploit these people, I give them what they ask. I pay a fair price. I worked with them and through them, I visited several villages and helped some of the suppliers to sell their products as they do not have a proper business. I think there are more than 1000 organisations like mine but most of them are of no use. They do not help the poor. I think I do more work for the villages to improve their earning than them [other companies in the industry]. (Participant N)

The owner of an organic restaurant and a farm shared her food pricing policy. The price of a meal is determined by the cost of it, even though she could charge a higher price.

The price of food is determined by cost but is not unfair to the consumers. This is the only organic restaurant in Sri Lanka. I can sell one meal here for over Rs.500/= [Rs. 500 = 4.18 NZD]. If I sell it at that price, only a limited number of people can afford it. So, for that reason, I have priced it Rs.350/= [Rs. 350 = 2.93 NZD]. I am not making a big profit. I just wanted to provide our food to more and more customers. Many people say our prices are very reasonable. I do not want to drain my consumers' pockets. (Participant W)

In summary, this data revealed that improving the economic vitality of communities was a business *goal* for participants during the post-launch phase of the venture. As mentioned above, the economic vitality of a community refers to its members' personal financial position. For instance, the owner of a computer software engineering company (Participant D) achieved his goal of improving the economic vitality of communities by building a company that brings foreign exchange to Sri Lanka. Similarly, the chairman of a premier software development company (Participant H) had a goal to help society by spending money.

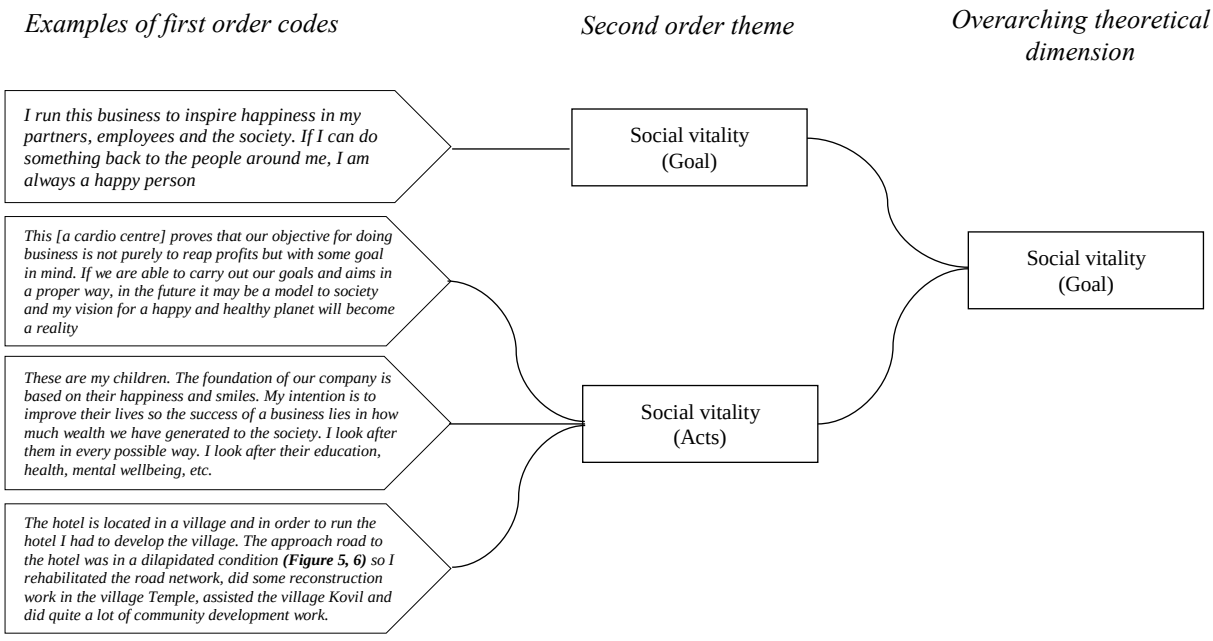
Analysis of the data suggested that these goals of elevating the economic vitality of communities are translated into different altruistic *acts* during the post-launch phase of the venture. For example, the commentary of the chairman of a holding company (Participant C) explained how he rectified a financial issue faced by the village farmers. His acts led the farmers to solve their problems and earn a fair amount of money for their work. .

Similarly, other participants (E, J, N, and W) showed acts of contributing to the economic vitality of communities. These acts included initiatives targeted at community members such as employees, shareholders, suppliers, customers, and societal members. Taken together, these community members improved economic vitalities in terms of enhancing their financial status.

7.2.2 Social Vitality

The *second* facet that emerged from the data was social vitality (see Figure 28 below). The social vitality of a community refers to the lifestyle of its members. An individual's lifestyle is determined by the level of education, health, happiness, family size, etc.

Figure 28: Data structure of Social Vitality



Source: Research data

The participants' *goal* of improving the social vitality of communities is evident in many commentaries. For example, the chairman of a business conglomerate expressed that he does business with a different goal in mind – that of earning an emotional return from his business. According to him, the emotional return includes the happiness of himself and people around him.

> *I do business having a different goal in mind. Most entrepreneurs do business expecting a material return but in my case I expect an emotional return. That means my happiness, the happiness of the people around me, my partners' happiness, in other words I run this business to inspire happiness in my partners, employees and society. If I can give something back to the people around me, I am always a happy person.* (Participant T)

The chairman of a holding company recognised the community as an essential part of his life: *[w]hen you take life, you have your personal life, family life, business life, identify, and do something valuable for the community* (Participant C). He expressed that one should do something valuable for the community to make his/her life complete. As he expressed; *[I]f we are not doing something for the place we were born in, it will mean that we were living for the sake of living and for being born into this world. If we feel we need to make a difference, it is then that our lives become complete* (Participant C). His intention of serving the community and society at large is even depicted in the company logo. Demonstrating the company logo, he explained his vision of contributing to creating a happy and healthy planet. He said that the logo shows a pair of hands holding up the globe with his company featured on it. As he said, *[I]f you look at my logo [Figure 29], I have taken the whole world into account, from North America to South Asia and the logo shows a pair of hands holding up the globe with NMK*

featured on it; the logo depicts a happy and healthy planet. So, anyone looking at my logo can easily understand my vision of serving society (Participant C).

Figure 29: NMK Holdings logo

Source: Research Data: Reproduced with permission.

Analysis of the data suggested that these goals of improving the social vitality of communities are translated into altruistic *acts* during the post-launch phase of the venture. These acts include making positive contributions to the stakeholders of the business, such as employees, customers, and societal members, to improve their living standards. For instance, the chairman of a holding company established a Foundation to implement community development initiatives. As he explained:

In line with the objective of "giving back to society", we formed NMK Charity Foundation. Through this Foundation, we do a lot of community development work. That means we work for the health, education, public, research and development, and Ayurveda sectors to re-introduce systems to the current generation. (Participant C)

He explained a significant initiative was the construction of a cardio centre (see Figure 30 below) to enhance the health of communities.

We found that the Kurunegala [Kurunegala is a major city in Sri Lanka] teaching hospital lacked a capacity to serve heart patients. So, we built a cardio centre called "Hadasuwa Medura" [meaning; the Mansion of Solace] and donated it to the Kurunegala teaching hospital. This was a big programme, which had a huge impact on society. This proves that our objective for doing business is not purely to reap profits but with some goal in mind. If we are able to carry out our goals and aims in a proper way, in the future it may be a model for society and my vision for a happy and healthy planet will become a reality. (Participant C)

Figure 30: "The Mansion of Solace" cardio centre, Kurunegala, Sri Lanka

Source: Research Data: Reproduced with permission

The T-shirt manufacturer explained his work as a guest speaker (see Figure 31 below). In addition, he assists undergraduates to gain industry experience by employing them in his company (see Figure 32 below). As he explained:

I consider serving the community as a big element of my entrepreneurial journey. So, I do a lot of activities to help society. First, I take part in entrepreneurship guest speeches organised by universities. I can share my experience, and explain how I overcame the obstacles

of this journey. Second, I help undergraduates who join our company to cover their university internships so that they can understand border aspects of managing a SME. I encourage them to make their own decisions. I improve their capacity by improving their self-confidence by allowing them to plan, carry out and control their projects. (Participant A)

Figure 31: Guest lecture, Faculty of Science Orientation 2020, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

Source: Research Data: Reproduced with permission

Figure 32: A brochure for internships, Reproduced with permission

INTERNSHIPS

(Research & Development | New Projects | Business Development)

Now, that you are an undergraduate looking for an internship opportunity.
We know you are talented and have the right attitude.
And if your answer is a "yes" to the following questions, we know you can assist us.
In return, we assure you a wealth of unorthodox exposure to a dynamic business environment during your stay with us.

1. Do you enjoy being a part of startup culture?
2. When you can easily relax being a small fish in a big tank, can you take the pain to become a big fish in a small tank and then to help make the tank bigger?
3. Do you feel comfortable to explore the unknown, the unheard and the unseen to see if we can exploit a business opportunity?
4. Can you put your knowledge into practice? We do not expect rocket science. And for your kind information we do not make rockets either 😊 All what we need to know is whether you have "common sense" to link your already acquired knowledge in art, business & science to introduce simple yet valuables solutions to our business operations.

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The chairman of a business conglomerate expressed his contribution to society. Showing some photographs in his office (see Figure 33 below), he explained that he looks after twelve deprived children in Sri Lanka.

These are my children. The foundation of our company is based on their happiness and smiles. My intention is to improve their lives. The success of a business lies in how much wealth we generate for society. I look after them in every possible way. I look after their education, health, mental wellbeing, etc. (Participant G)

Figure 33: Deprived children.

Source: Research Data: Reproduced with permission

He further shared the recognition that he has received as a result of his service to communities and mentioned that the contribution he made to support communities helped his career.

As a result of the community work I did, I was conferred the title of Deshabandu, have been classified as the Best Entrepreneur, Sri Lankan of the Year, and am in the Hall of Fame, so I have achieved the highest accolades. Now I can do anything, the contribution I made lifted me up. I am at the peak of my career now. (Participant G)

The jewellery maker explained her initiatives to elevate the living standards of community members involves improving the living standards of craftsmen. In addition, she has introduced eco-friendly jewellery made from alternative materials (see Figure 34 below).

She claimed that she serves the community in two ways. *First*, she helps the environment by promoting sustainability. *Second*, she employs people in rural areas and those with disabilities.

> *How we serve the community is purely based on helping these breadwinners (craftsman) and small-scale collectors we get the gems from. In addition, I have introduced a new range of jewellery made from alternative materials. This involves eco-friendly/waste material and stuff. Therefore, I serve the community in two ways. First, by promoting sustainability. Second, helping communities who have the skills but not the voice. I have identified few communities like that. One is the communities that live in rural areas. Other are people who have Downs syndrome. I employ them in my work as a community service.* (Participant Q)

Figure 34: Jewellery made out of eco-friendly material

Source: Research Data: Reproduced with permission

The chairman of a high-tech company expressed his gratification at seeing how his employees have improved their living standards.

> *I gain satisfaction by seeing how my employees have improved their way of life. I feel I have given them what they want. Most of my employees are youngsters from the neighbouring villages and there have been occasions when I have visited their homes on the death of their parents or family members, and their homes are not suitable even to keep the remains of their loved ones. One home had no roof, but a polythene sheet had been spread across to give shelter. So, they are really poor, but after coming to work for me they have improved their lifestyle and when I visit them several years later I find that they have built a small house, and some have even bought vehicles.* (Participant F)

The restaurant owner shared his experience during the time he constructed his hotel (see Figure 35 below). He had to develop the road to the hotel due to its dilapidated condition (see Figure 36 below). In addition, he contributed to the reconstruction the village Temple and Kovil.

> *The hotel is located in a village and in order to run the hotel I had to develop the village. The approach road to the hotel was in a dilapidated condition so I rehabilitated the road network, did some reconstruction work for the village Temple, assisted the village Kovil and did quite a lot of community development work.* (Participant X)

Figure 35: Hotel under construction

Source: Research Data: Reproduced with permission

Figure 36: The road with dilapidated condition:

Source: Research Data: Reproduced with permission

He continued explaining that he had no opposition from the Temple and Kovil to run his hotel. His believes that community members did not oppose his restaurant because of the community development work he undertook. He claimed that did not have any ulterior motives behind helping the community, but wanted to assist the village. Intending to help the community, he started assisting villagers with special events such as the New Year Festival. He shared that with all the community work he contributed to villagers began to respect him in return:

> *I had no issues whatsoever from the Temple or Kovil to run my hotel. Usually when a hotel is erected in the middle of a very rural village, there is much opposition, especially from the community. But, because of the development work I had carried out in the village, I had no problems. I did not undertake this development work with any ulterior motives, but I used to help the village Temple, the Kovil. In addition, when there were any events in the village like the New Year Festival I used to get involved and help in whatever way I can with the intention of helping the community. Usually, a person who owns a hotel is not very well recognised, especially in a village, as the villagers feel that with the arrival of tourists the people will lose their values. But in my case, because of the community work I had undertaken, people who normally stand around with their sarongs folded up, used to immediately put their sarongs down when they see my car approaching.* (Participant X)

He concluded by mentioning that the villagers wanted their village developed (see Figure 38 below), he needed to run the hotel (see Figure 37 below), and finally, as a result of the community work he did both parties arrived at a win-win situation. As he concluded:

> *What I wanted was to rehabilitate the road leading to my hotel and the people wanted their village developed. Therefore, I think that because these two elements matched, I*

earned that recognition and the restaurant grew; in turn, villagers improved their living standards. (Participant X)

Figure 37: Hotel after construction

Source: Research Data: Reproduced with permission

Figure 38: The road after construction

The timber mill owner explained his initiatives to improve the living standards of his employees. Initially, he made inquiries into their economic backgrounds and realised that five of them had no proper homes. He granted Rs. 100,000 [Rs. 100,000 = 820 NZD] for each employee to improve his or her home. He also explained the reason for granting money to the family members of each employee was to ensure that the money was spent in the desired manner. According to him, he continued this initiative annually. As he explained:

> *I got the idea of helping the employees to improve their living standards. We therefore made inquiries into their economic backgrounds and found that some of them had no proper homes. They were not interested in improving themselves because they had got used to taking liquor. We then selected five deserving employees and gave them a grant of Rs 100,000 in order to improve their homes. We got their family members to come over, explained the reason for this grant, so that they will not spend this money on other things. The next year, we selected five more deserving employees and this practice continued.* (Participant V)

The owner of an organic restaurant and farm explained her initiatives to protect customers by never using artificial ingredients.

> *Even when we are cooking, we do not use anything like Ajinomoto and soup cubes. I always wish that the food we cook should be medicine to our consumers. We are giving everything with those good thoughts. I've started the business not to maximise profits, but to give the customers something good. This is a trade approved by the Lord Buddha.* (Participant W)

The drop shipping business owner explained his initiatives to improve the health and lifestyle of communities through an organisation called E-Club Youth.

When you take the community, we started an organisation called E-Club Youth which is not only for the welfare of the staff of E-Club but also for those outside E-Club, that means those in the society who have various issues. We identify people or organisations in our society who need assistance for example during the recent Pandemic. Because of the quarantine situation there was a Children's Home in our area who had no food to feed their charges. We therefore helped them out, that is through the E-Club Youth organisation. Similarly, last year we conducted a Blood Donation Campaign at our Panadura E-Club office premises. We were able to donate about 75 to 80 pints of blood and we are planning to conduct this campaign every year. (Participant B)

Figure 39: Blood donation campaign organised by the E-Club Youth

Source: Research Data: Reproduced with permission

In addition to societal contribution, he explained how E-Club Youth contributes to improve the wellbeing of the staff members of the company.

In addition to helping society, we also assist our E-Club members by giving them a sizeable cash gift when they get married or even if there is a funeral, say after a death of a family member, a certain amount is donated for funeral expenses. In addition to this cash donation, our staff members, both permanent and temporary staff, help out at the funeral because not only cash is important but during a funeral there are lots of

arrangements also to be made. Also, if a child of an E-Club Youth member has been selected to enter University after completing 'A' Levels successfully, we assist by giving cash donations. (Participant B)

To conclude, this data revealed that contributing to improve the social vitality of communities has been a *goal* of participants during the post-launch phase of the venture. As mentioned above, the social vitality of a community member refers to the lifestyle of a community member. An individual's lifestyle is determined by the level of education, health, happiness, family size, etc.

The goal of contributing to social vitalities of communities was evident in two participant commentaries. For instance, the chairman of a business conglomerate expressed his goal of attaining a emotional return from his business. Similarly, the commentary of the chairman of a holding company showed community is an essential part of his life. (Participant C).

Analysis of the data suggested that these goals are converted into different altruistic *acts* during the post-launch phase of the venture. A number of participant commentaries revealed acts that contributed to improving the social vitality of communities. For instance, the chairman of a business conglomerate expressed that he looks after twelve deprived children in Sri Lanka. He said that his intention is to improve the lives of those children. In addition, he mentioned that the success of the business depends on the wealth he creates for society. (Participant G). Other participant commentaries including those of participants A, B, Q, F, X, V, and W showed various acts to improve social vitality.

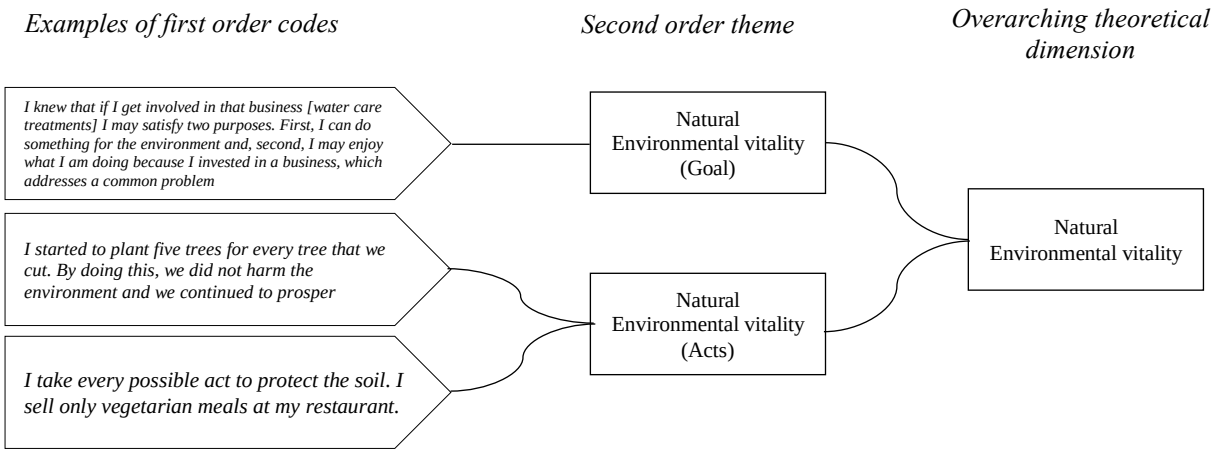
A few other participants disclosed that enhancing the social vitality of communities improved themselves as well. For instance, Participant G, the chairman of a business

conglomerate, explained how he benefited from his community service. Similarly, the restaurant owner (Participant X) said that the villagers started to respect him as a result of the contributions he made to the wellbeing of the village. In conclusion, communities can be shaped by entrepreneurship, but communities also shape and form entrepreneurial outcomes.

7.2.3 Natural Environmental Vitality

The *last* facet that emerged from the data was natural environmental vitality (see Figure 40 below). The natural environment encompasses all living and non-living things that occur naturally. This facet includes *goals* and *acts* implemented to protect the natural environment where communities are situated.

Figure 40: Data structure of Natural Environmental Vitality



Source: Research data

The *goal* of contributing to improve the natural environmental vitality of communities was evident in the water-care company owner's commentary. He expressed his view of engaging in a business that helps to solve a common problem. Environmental issues were a common problem at the time he launched the venture. He said that engaging in such a business satisfies two purposes – his objective of doing something for the environment and the enjoyment of participating in a business that addresses a problem.

I saw the potential in this business [water care treatments] and knew that there was a good future because environmental issues were a common problem at that time. I knew that if I got involved in that business I may satisfy two purposes. First, I can do something for the environment and, second, I may enjoy what I am doing because I invested in a business, which addresses a common problem. (Participant R)

Analysis of the data suggested that these goals of contributing to improve the natural environmental vitality of communities are translated into selfless *acts* during the post-launch phase of the venture. For instance, the timber mill owner conducted a tree planting initiative as his business involved cutting down trees.

I started to plant five trees for every tree that we cut. By doing this, we did not harm the environment and we continued to prosper. Therefore, every time we purchased wood from a source, we encouraged them to plant trees. In this way, I have planted a large number of trees. I just wanted to give something back to the environment. (Participant V)

The owner of an organic restaurant and farm explained her intention and strategies that she has put in place to protect the natural environment.

We have organic farms. An organic farm is where no poison falls to the ground. Otherwise, the farmer is bound in the poison tank [paddy fields] and runs around poisoning. But we never do it. I take every possible action to protect the soil. I sell only vegetarian meals at my restaurant. Did you know, a vegan diet could reduce an individual's carbon footprint by up to 73%? By promoting this, I have a great sense of achievement because I contribute to serve the environment. (Participant W)

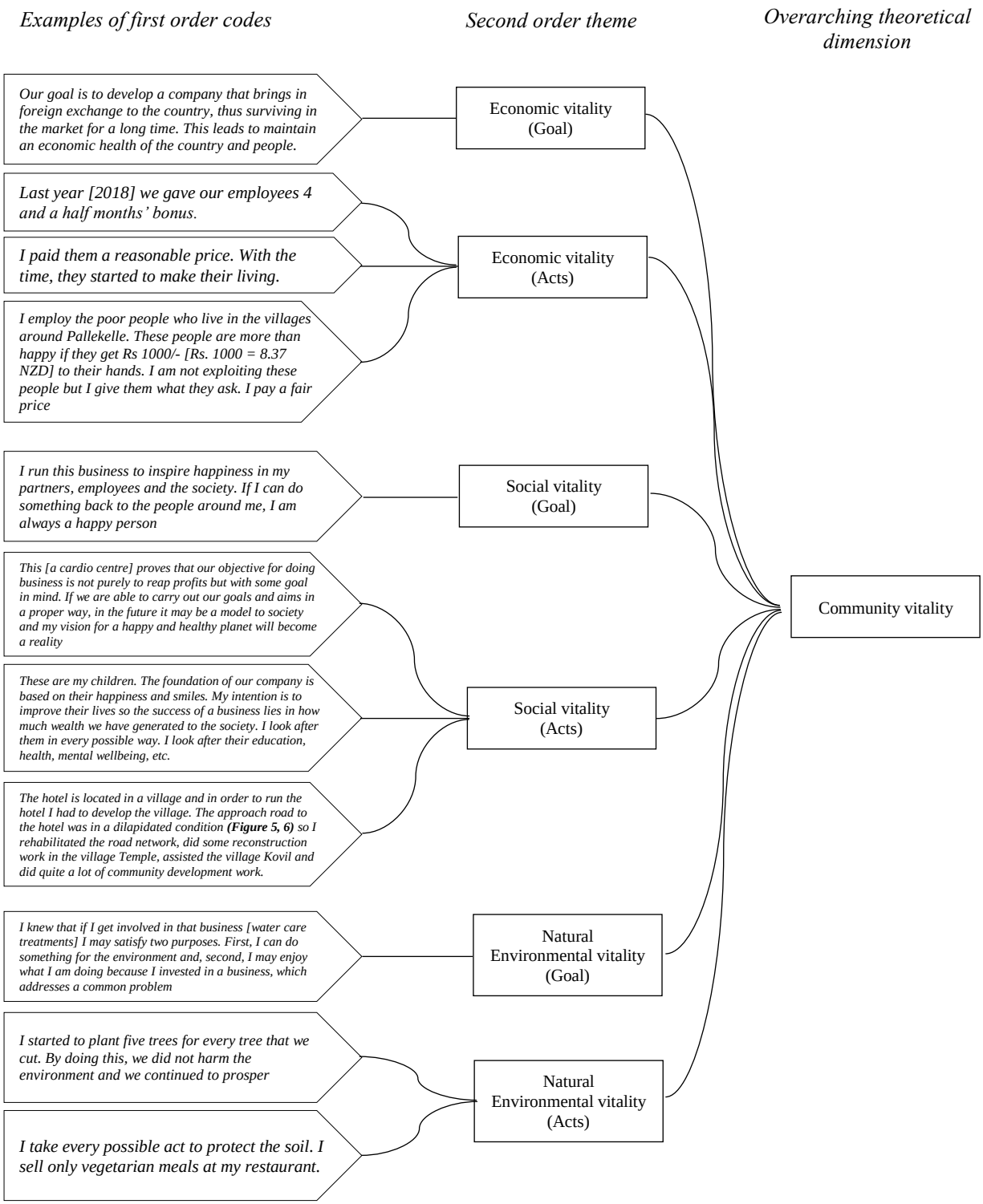
In addition, she explained her initiatives to ensure that the business runs in an environmentally friendly manner.

> *The other thing is that we do is operate this business in an environmentally friendly manner. We do not use materials such as polythene and plastic. I am trying to do my best for this country. I can be happy if I look back on every second of my life today. Because I've done what I want to do without bothering anyone. I have done what is good for the entire world, society, and the environment. I hope to continue my works. It's just self-satisfaction.* (Participant W)

In conclusion, this data revealed that contributing to improve the natural environmental vitality of communities was a *goal* for participants during the post-launch phase of the venture. These goals were formed to protect the natural environment. For instance, the owner of the water-care company (Participant R) described his goal of engaging in a business that contributes to solving a common problem – that of water purification. According to him, contributing to an environmental matter is a great cause, which also gives him enjoyment.

Analysis of the data suggested that these goals of contributing to improve the natural environmental vitality of communities are translated into different selfless *acts* during the post-launch phase of the venture. For example, the timber mill owner started planting five trees for every tree that he cuts in his business. He initiated this to protect the environment. His commentary shows that he holds himself accountable for the harm that he does to the natural environment. The restaurant owner's acts to protect the natural environment include protecting the soil and selling only vegan meals. As a whole, these acts improve the natural environmental vitality where communities are situated.

Figure 41: Data structure of Community Vitalities



Source: Research data

Based on the idea that entrepreneurial action impacts on communities and that this action is informed by Buddhism, the above commentaries showed that the participants made positive contributions to improve the economic, social and natural environmental vitalities of communities (see Figure 41 above)

Economic vitality includes an entrepreneur's altruistic acts enhancing community members' financial position. An individual's financial situation is determined by his/her income from employment, investments in trading assets such as stocks and bonds, and the economic condition of the country. There were a number of acts implemented by the participants with the intention of improving the financial vitality of communities. They include rectifying an issue the village farmers faced (Participant C), paying a significant bonus to his staff (Participant E), bearing the cost of a failed business negotiation on behalf of a customer (Participant J), helping suppliers as they were struggling with business (Participant N), and pricing commodities based on the cost of the product (Participant W). Taken collectively, these acts show how the participants contributed to improve economic vitality.

Social vitality refers to the lifestyle of a community member. An individual's lifestyle is determined by the level of education, health, happiness, family size, etc. Various selfless acts were undertaken by the participants with the intention of improving the social vitality of communities, such as constructing a cardio centre for the benefit of heart patients (Participant C), assisting undergraduates by taking part in guest lectures, and allowing them to work with his company to gain practical exposure (Participant A), taking care of deprived children to uplift their wellbeing (Participant G), employing people from rural areas (Participant Q), offering jobs to people (Participant F), rehabilitating a dilapidated road network and reconstructing village temple (Participant X), donating money to improve living standards of employees in need (Participant V), selling organic food to customers (Participant W), offering

food for a children's home during the COVID pandemic and organising a blood donation campaign (Participant B). These acts show how the participants improved the social vitality of community members.

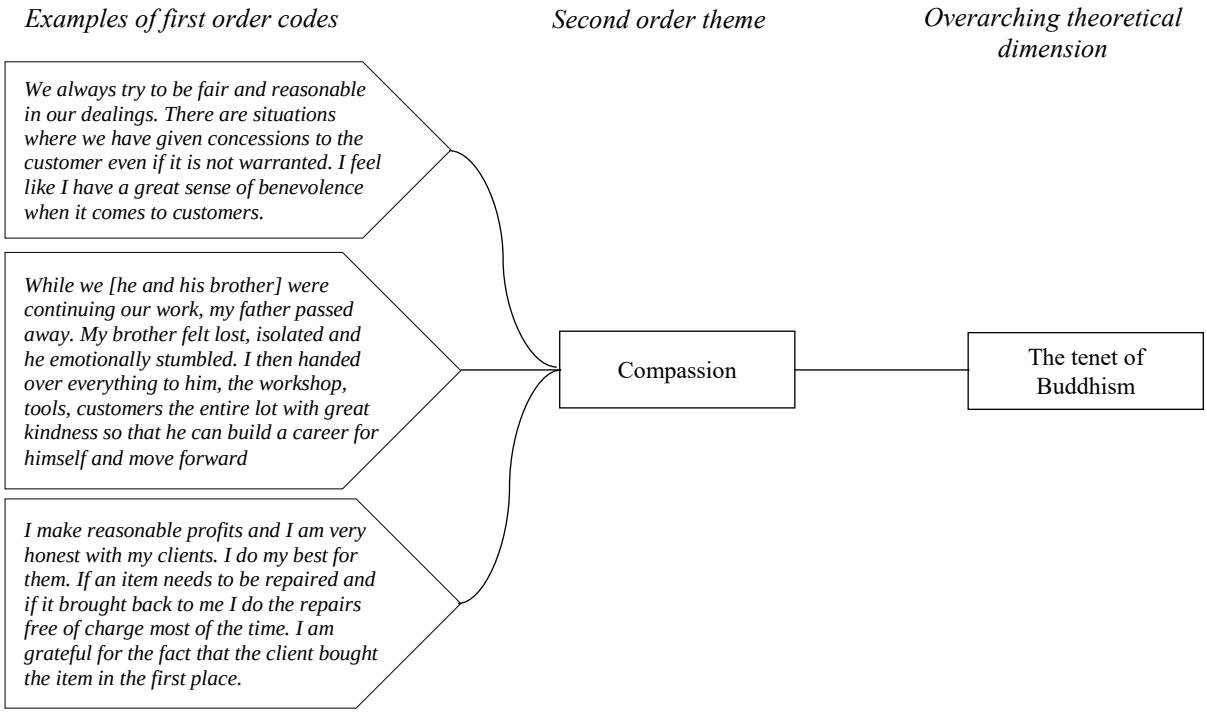
Natural environmental vitality encompass all living and non-living things that occur naturally. There were several altruistic acts by the participants to improve the natural environment of the communities. Those acts included planting trees (Participant V), and organic farming and avoiding non-recyclable materials (Participant W). As a whole, these acts show how the participants contributed to improve natural environmental vitality.

7.3 The Tenet of Buddhism

In this section of the chapter the tenet of Buddhism refers to the guiding principle of Buddhism that influenced the participants to make positive contributions to improve community vitality. Participants' acts to improve economic, social and natural environmental vitality were based on the desire to be compassionate to others (see Figure 42 below). Literature regarding compassion in the context of Buddhism also shows that altruism is motivated by compassion (Cheng, 2015).

Compassion refers to an openness to the suffering of others with a commitment to relieve it (Lama & Thupten, 1995). In the Buddhist philosophy, compassion is not only seen as an emotional response but also a response founded on the reason which is embedded in an ethical framework concerned with the selfless intention of freeing others from suffering.

Figure 42: Data structure of the tenet of Buddhism – Compassion



Source: Research data

The following two participant commentaries demonstrate their views of being compassionate towards others. The owner of a water-care company shared his view of being compassionate towards people and the environment. Along with intentions, such as refraining from intentional harm, not cheating, treating employees properly, and preventing environmental harming, he said that if he can be compassionate towards others that would be the best religion that he could have. He expressed that being compassionate is a teaching of Buddhism. He further shared his intentions of being a good corporate citizen. His opinion is that if one can be a responsible person in society, others automatically fall into place. As he shared:

If I know that what I am doing is correct and I don't do wrong intentionally, if I don't cheat, if I treat my employees in the proper way, don't harm the environment and if I can be

compassionate towards everyone, I think that is the best religion I could have. That what Buddhism taught me. I always believe in being a good corporate citizen and think that through the values I have created I should live a good life. If you are a good corporate citizen and the rest automatically falls into place. (Participant R)

The chairman of a dairy product company expressed his opinion about compassion in the view of Buddhism.

According to Buddhism, being compassionate towards all our stakeholders is something that has to be done in business otherwise everybody will suffer including myself. If we are compassionate towards society, I am sure any business will flourish. Because all businesses depend on the environment, if we serve the environment well it will serve us back. This goes with Buddhism too, if we do something good we will get it in return. (Participant K)

The following commentaries show that the participants exhibited altruistic *acts* based on being compassionate to others to improve community vitality. The chairman of a real estate development company expressed his intention of being compassionate regarding customer relationships. His opinion is that Buddhism does not teach one to win but to compromise and arrive at a win-win situation. He said that he is always trying to be fair and reasonable in his dealings. He said that he has experience where he offered concessions to the customers even if it not warranted. He expressed that he has a great sense of benevolence when it comes to customers. As he expressed:

Purchasing is all about negotiating. We have to negotiate the price, terms and conditions etc so it's a matter of negotiating all the way but as it's taught in Buddhism that we don't always strive to win, we try to compromise and come to a win-win situation. We always try to be fair and reasonable in our dealings. There are situations where we have given

concessions to the customer even if it is not warranted. I feel like I have a great sense of benevolence when it comes to customers. (Participant E)

He explained a situation that he contributed to improve the social vitality of a family on compassionate grounds.

There was an instance where a lady was selling her land to educate her child overseas. The land was worth about 20 lakhs but she was asking for only 10 lakhs as she was desperate for the money. We paid her 25 lakhs on compassionate grounds. She was a very innocent lady. I did this just for the sake of helping her to educate her son. (Participant E)

The owner of a software development company described how he act to improve the economic vitality of other companies. He said that either himself or his managing director do not let a project fail. They keep in touch and treat each customer equally regardless of the value of the business deal. Even if a project fails, they try to revive it a make it a success. His opinion is that he should assist the uprising companies. Recalling the struggle he had to experience during the early days of his venture, he said that he emphatically supports the uprising companies. He expressed that he willing to assist other people, depending on the resources he possesses.

We don't let any projects fail because either myself or my Managing Director is always in touch with all these projects and we treat all our customers in the same way irrespective of whether it's one user or hundred users, whether the project costs Rs 1 million or Rs 100 million, we treat them all alike. We give them the same attention and respect. Even if some projects come to failing point we are able to revive them and make them succeed. We encounter a lot of problems, but we somehow manage them. My opinion is that we should help the upcoming companies. I know the struggle that I had to face during the early days of the venture. So, I

help the upcoming companies, sometimes in an empathic manner. I am a person who likes to help people and depending on the resources I have, I help them. Even today, it's the same. If I am able to help someone in need, I will never back out. (Participant J)

The money broking company owner said that after embracing Buddhism he was able to do more for the business and the people around him than any other broking firm would do, to uplift the business and stakeholders to a certain level.

I feel that after I embraced Buddhism I was able to do more for the business and the people around me than any normal broking firm would do, to bring the business and stakeholders to a certain level. Many peoples' livelihoods depended on me. Actually, what I wanted was to nurture the lives of fifteen families [staff members] dependent on me. I only wanted to protect them. I have funded my peoples' houses, cars etc with the intention of uplifting their livelihood. Sometimes I feel sorry for them. (Participant M)

The cane furniture manufacturer explained how he contributes to improve the economic vitality of his friends. He shared that some of his friends ask for money, and he lent them money on compassionate grounds. He said that there are some instances where he does not get the money he gave. He said that he eases himself with great kindness, thinking that he has contributed to uplift his friends' lives. As he explained:

Some of my friends come to me saying, "Mr Deepthi please don't get angry but can you lend me Rs 50,000 [Rs. 50,000 = 415 NSD], I will return it tomorrow". I therefore feel sorry for them and give them the money. I have lent them Rs 50,000 and Rs 25,000 but sometimes I don't even get the money back. I know it a malpractice but I ease myself with great kindness, thinking that I helped them to uplift their lives. (Participant N)

He further shared how he contributes to improve the economic vitalities of customers. He shared how he treats the customer even if an item is being sold. Mentioning he conducts the business based on Buddhist principles, he said that he makes reasonable profits and truthful with the customers. He shared that if an item needs to be repaired and if it is brought back to him, he does the repair free of charge. He praises if a sold item is delivered back to him. He mentioned that he has a sense of kindness to serve them even after items are sold.

My business practices are run on Buddhist principles. I make reasonable profits and I am very honest with my clients. I do my best for them. If an item needs to be repaired and if it brought back to me I do the repairs free of charge most of the time. I am grateful for the fact that the client bought the item in the first place. I always think that I have a sense of tenderness to serve them even after the item is sold. (Participant N)

The refrigerator manufacturer expressed how he contributed to improve the social vitality of his brother by handing over his earlier business. He said that while he continues his work with his brother, his father passed away. He shared that his brother collapsed emotionally due to this tragedy. He decided to hand over his business to his brother with great kindness so that he can develop a career for himself and get over the sorrow. He shared he came home empty-handed.

While we [he and his brother] were continuing our work, my father passed away. My brother felt lost, isolated and he collapsed emotionally. I then handed over everything to him, the workshop, tools, customers the entire lot with great kindness so that he can build a career for himself and move forward and I came home empty-handed. (Participant O)

The timber mill owner shared his opinion about the importance of improving social vitality of communities by doing meritorious deeds to people in need. Citing a story of a king,

he shared, like the way a king continued doing meritorious deeds to the people in need, he continued giving alms to people to nurture their lives. He shared that he won the Best Contractor award consistently for five years and many children excelled in education. His understanding is that these achievements are due to his religious background and the meritorious deeds that he committed doing in the past for the have-nots.

There is a story of a king who used to give alms to about 500 monks. This king did not stop giving alms at any given time and used to even give alms to very poor people. Lord Buddha explains that this happened because of something good the king had done in his previous life, and because he was strong-willed, he continued giving alms. Therefore, we too did not stop any of our meritorious deeds but continued with the giving of alms and other good deeds to the people in need to nurture their lives. I won the Best Contractor's award continuously for five years and my children excelled in their studies. All this has been achieved because of our religious background and meritorious deeds that I did to people in need. All these have protected us from harm and helped us achieve all what we have today. (Participant V)

In summary, this data revealed that Buddhism influenced the participants to make positive contributions to improve community vitality (see Figure 42 above). Their acts were purely altruistic and guided by the desire to be compassionate to others. As mentioned above, compassion refers to an openness to the suffering of others with a commitment to relieve it (Lama & Thupten, 1995). Participants expressed their views of being compassionate to others.

Analysis of the data showed that altruistic acts based on compassion improved community vitality. For instance, the chairman of a real estate development company assisted a lady to educate her son. Another altruistic act led by compassion is evident in the refrigerator manufacturer who handed over his business to his brother. Similarly, the commentaries of participants J, M, N, and V exhibited altruistic acts led by compassion to elevate community

vitality. Taken collectively, these data suggest that compassion guided the participants to make positive contributions to improve community vitality.

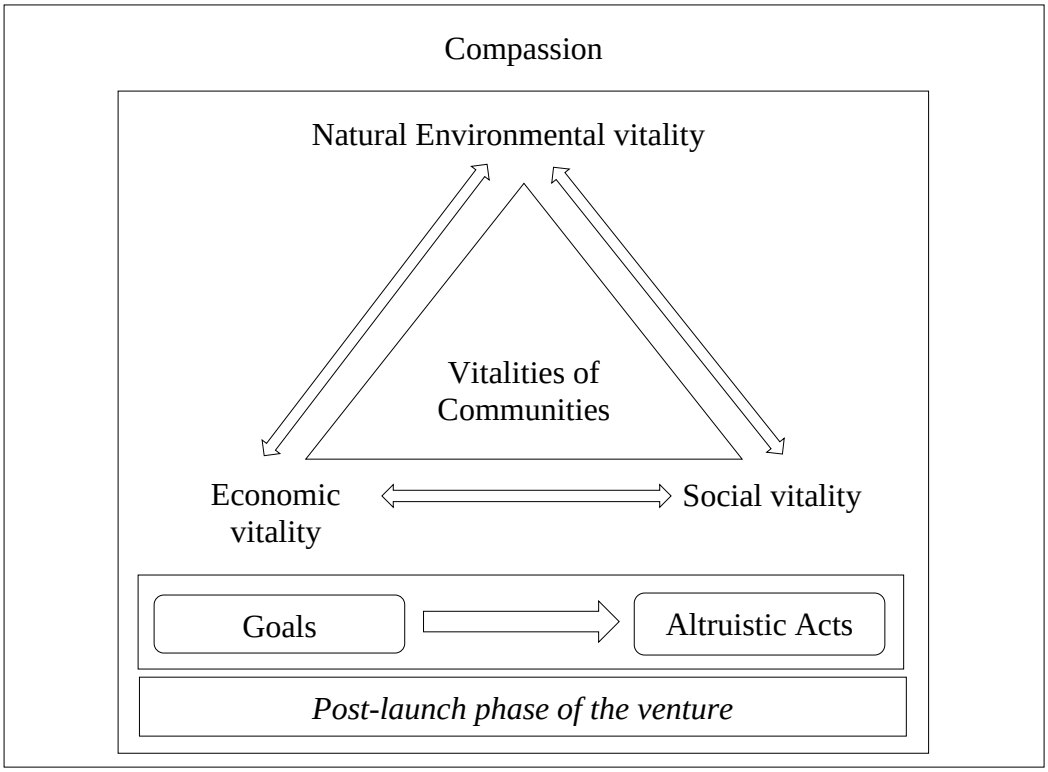
7.4 The Integrative Framework

This chapter presented the findings regarding the last phase of entrepreneurial action – that of community vitality. According to the findings, post-launch entrepreneurial action impacts on communities and this action is informed by Buddhism. The last phase of entrepreneurial action equates to the post-launch stage of the venture where the entrepreneur makes positive contributions to improve community vitality. The vitality of a community refers to its ability to sustain itself.

Serving communities offers excellent potential for improving their economic, social, and environmental vitalities. Economic vitality refers to community members' personal financial position. The social vitality of a community refers to the lifestyle of its members. Natural environmental vitality refers to the wellbeing of the natural environment where the communities are situated.

During the post-launch phase of the venture, community vitality is improved by goals and altruistic acts. Entrepreneurs set their goals to improve community vitality, and subsequently, the goals are translated into various acts during this phase of the venture. The acts to enhance community vitality are purely altruistic and driven by the compassion of the entrepreneur. Compassion refers to an openness to the suffering of others with a commitment to relieve it. According to Buddhism, compassion is not only seen as an emotional response but also a response founded on the reason which is embedded in an ethical framework concerned with the selfless intention of freeing others from suffering. These findings can be summarised to an integrative model as depicted below (see Figure 43 below).

Figure 43: The integrative framework of Community Vitalities



Source: Research data

Chapter Eight

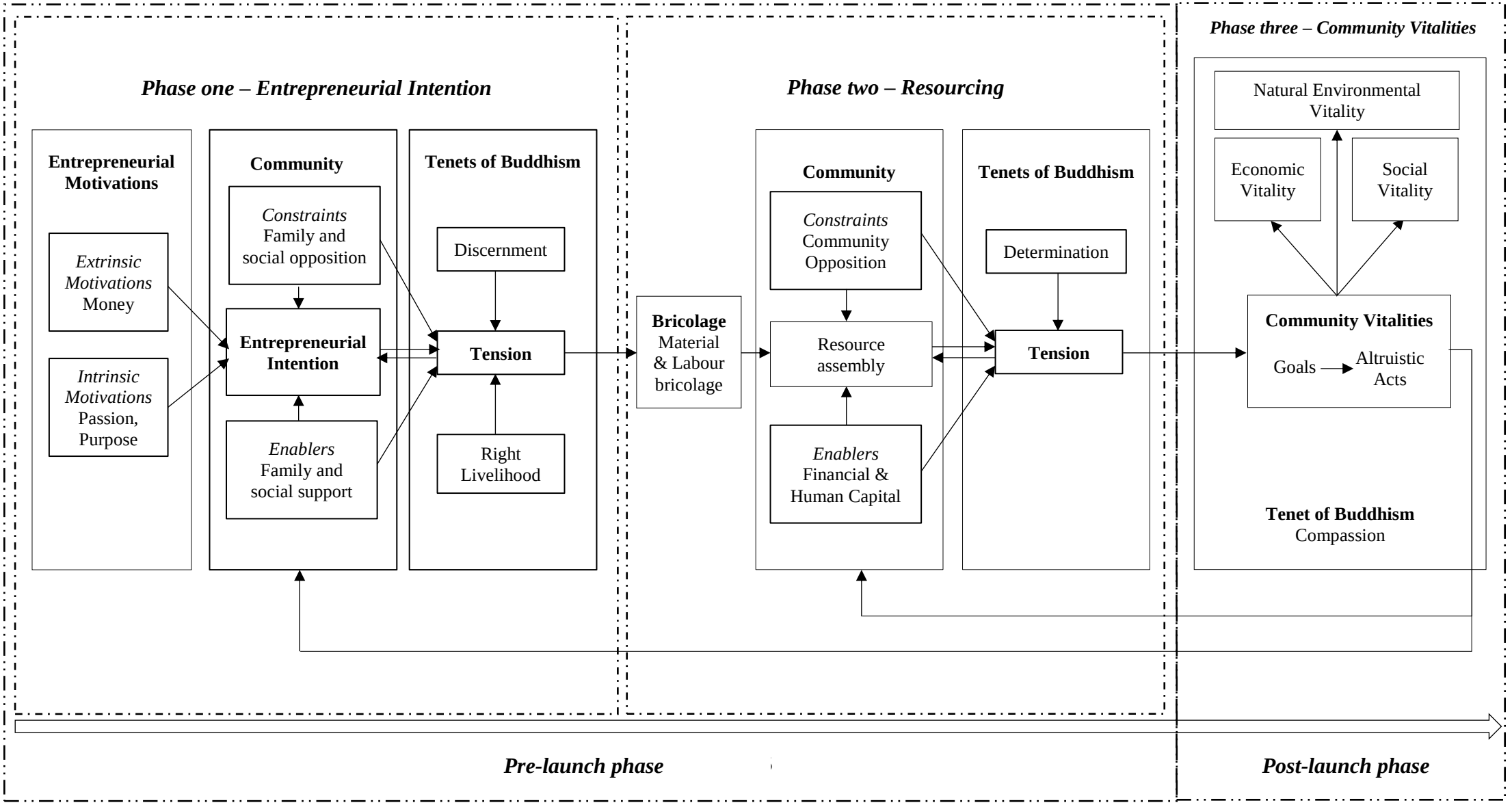
Discussion and Development of the Conceptual Model

8.1 Introduction

Chapters Five, Six, and Seven offered insights into the findings of this study on the pre- and post-launch phases of entrepreneurial action. This chapter presents a theoretical framework that offers a coherent conceptual model of entrepreneurial action. The model attempts to draw the structural (i.e., community) and religion (i.e., Buddhism) contexts together to more fully inform entrepreneurial action.

This chapter is organised into two main parts. The first part – the integrated model (see Figure 44 below) – is derived from the findings and sets the scene for the presentation of the conceptual model. It summarises the findings from the last three chapters regarding: entrepreneurial intention, resourcing, and community vitality. The second part of the chapter, which is the central focus of the discussion, develops the conceptual model of the study and synthesises the findings into structural and religious contexts of entrepreneurial action. Structure equates to the community where the entrepreneurial venture is manifested. Religion equates to the social-cultural system of designated actions. Entrepreneurial action is discussed as an interactive perspective stemming from the idea that entrepreneurial action occurs within the interactions of the structural and religious contexts. This central argument embraces three notions. *First*, entrepreneurship involves a series of entrepreneurial actions. *Second*, entrepreneurial actions interact with the context, and *third*, entrepreneurial action requires agency. These three notions are illuminated in this section in order to theorise entrepreneurial action. The chapter ends with a summary while setting the scene for the final chapter – the conclusion of the study.

Figure 44: Entrepreneurial action – Pre and Post-Launch phases of a venture



8.2 The Integrated Model Derived from the Findings

This section sets the scene for the presentation of the conceptual model summarising the findings derived from the previous three chapters – that of entrepreneurial intention, resourcing, and community vitalities. The three chapters collectively presented pre- and post-launch phases of a venture (see Figure 44 above). The pre-launch phases include entrepreneurial intention and resourcing. The post-launch phase includes community vitality

8.2.1 Entrepreneurial Intention

Findings related to the first phase of entrepreneurial action – that of entrepreneurial intention – showed the interaction of community and Buddhism. Entrepreneurial intention equates to one's intention to form an entrepreneurial venture. It is formed by the individual's attitude towards entrepreneurship, found through extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Extrinsic motivations include an expectation of a separable outcome, such as making money, by engaging in entrepreneurship. In this way, participants were extrinsically motivated to engage in entrepreneurship due to the expectation of external rewards.

Not all entrepreneurial intentions are generated to attain economic gains. Apart from the motivation to make money, some individuals engaged in entrepreneurship to reduce a resulting tension. These types of entrepreneurial motivations capture intrinsically motivated entrepreneurial intentions. Intrinsic motivations include personal interests that drive an individual to achieve a particular desire, such as engaging in entrepreneurship due to a passion to serve society.

The examination of the nexus between community and entrepreneurial intention illustrated that participants' intention to create a venture is both enabled and constrained by

family[11] and social[12] community conduits. *First*, family played an essential role in enabling participants' entrepreneurial intention, and family members provided instrumental,[13] non-instrumental,[14] and indecisive[15] support. In contrast, participants' entrepreneurial intention was constrained by families due to two reasons – that of a family member's preference for white-collar jobs over entrepreneurial careers, and their perception of entrepreneurship as an insecure occupation.

Second, regarding the social community involvement in entrepreneurial action, data revealed that the community often supported participants' entrepreneurial intention by providing instrumental and non-instrumental support. The contrasting results on the community's opposition to participants' entrepreneurial intention suggested that participants do not see society as favourably disposed towards entrepreneurship for two reasons – that of the prevalence of less developed cultures, and the existence of a negative impression of entrepreneurship. Participants who saw the social community as an opposing force for entrepreneurial intention suggested remedial actions, such as sources of working capital and implementing structural changes to Sri Lanka's education system, to enhance entrepreneurial intentions.

Communities (family and social) being helpful (enablers) and detrimental (constraints) created tensions for participants when carrying out their entrepreneurial intentions. Data suggested that participants' religious background – Buddhism – has helped to reduce tension. The quality of being discerning – discernment – assisted participants to review the tensions

[11] Family (i.e., close community conduit) refers to the group that the entrepreneur is surrounded with consisting of parents, spouse, and children.
[12] Social (i.e., distant community conduit) is any member who is outside the family unit such as, relatives, friends, colleagues, peers, etc.
[13] Instrumental support refers to tangible support such as assistance in finance, resources etc.
[14] Non-instrumental support refers to intangible support such as encouragements, motivations etc.
[15] Indecisive support refers to the support that is neither instrumental nor non-instrumental.

imposed by communities and arrive at a decision that was compatible with their values. In this way, participants' quality of being discerning assisted them to proceed with their entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, data suggested that participants shaped their entrepreneurial intentions by incorporating the concept of right livelihood. They ensured right livelihood in their entrepreneurial intentions by engaging in ethical businesses. Furthermore, right livelihood assisted them to refrain from trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, or poisons, killing animals, cheating etc.

8.2.2 Resourcing

Findings related to the second phase of entrepreneurial action – that of resourcing – and its nexus between community and Buddhism were presented (see Figure 44 above). Resourcing is the immediate step a prospective entrepreneur might take to proceed with his/her entrepreneurial intention. Data suggested that the resourcing phase consists of two stages: bricolage and assembly.

Bricolage refers to "making do" by using the resources on hand. Pursuing entrepreneurial intentions by engaging in bricolage behaviour was a valid starting point due to the participants' resource constraints. Data depicted two forms of bricolage behaviours – material[16] and labour bricolage[17]. Community members' influence was only seen among the participants who engaged with labour bricolage. Family and social community members enabled labour bricolage by contributing labour, knowledge, and skills.

[16] Material bricolage refers to the mobilisation of pre-existing materials (readily accessible resources such as places, own savings, and single application materials with new use) at hand.

[17] Labour bricolage refers to the mobilisation of one's own labour with another readily accessible individual(s) (friends, suppliers, relatives etc).

Bricoleurs who tended to make do by capitalising resources on hand continued to the second stage of resourcing – resource assembly – as they needed to acquire further resources. Data suggested resource assembly as a resource accumulation stage where the bricoleurs attempted to increase and strengthen the resource base before launching their venture. Community members became further involved during this stage, *enabling* and *constraining* resource assembly. Community members enabled resource assembly in two ways. *First*, they directly assisted the participants' resource assembly by providing resources (i.e., direct role). *Second*, community members indirectly assisted the participants by forming links with other another parties to access the resource (i.e., intermediary role). These direct and intermediary roles of community members enabled the generation of financial[18] and human capital[19].

In spite of the enabling role, community members sometimes constrained resource assembly. The three forms of opposition included community members' reluctance to provide finance, pressure to relocate production facilities, and a lack of encouragement for the entrepreneurial endeavour from community members.

Communities being both helpful and detrimental towards resourcing created tensions for participants during their resource assembly. However, data revealed that the participants' Buddhist background appears helpful in managing tension. Participants' quality of being determined (i.e., determination) guided them to eliminate the tensions.

8.2.3 Community Vitality

The above explanation set out the findings related to the first phase of entrepreneurial action – that of entrepreneurial intention and resourcing. The last phase of entrepreneurial action equates to the post-launch phase of a venture where the entrepreneur makes positive

[18] Financial capital includes cash, grants or loans that are admissible to economic activity.
[19] Human capital includes labour and knowledge that are admissible to economic activity.

contributions to improve community vitality (see Figure 44 above). These post-launch entrepreneurial actions are informed by Buddhism. The vitality of a community refers to its ability to sustain itself.

Analysis of data suggested that improving communities in terms of making a positive contribution was an objective for the post-launch phase of a venture. This objective is translated into different altruistic acts enhancing community vitality. These acts were based on participants' capacity to improve a community. Data suggested that participants' acts to improve communities offered the potential for improving its economic[20], social[21] and natural environmental[22] vitalities. Regarding the religious involvement in enriching communities, data suggested that participants' motives are purely altruistic and are guided by a wish to be compassionate to others. According to Buddhism, compassion refers to an openness to the suffering of others with a commitment to relieve it.

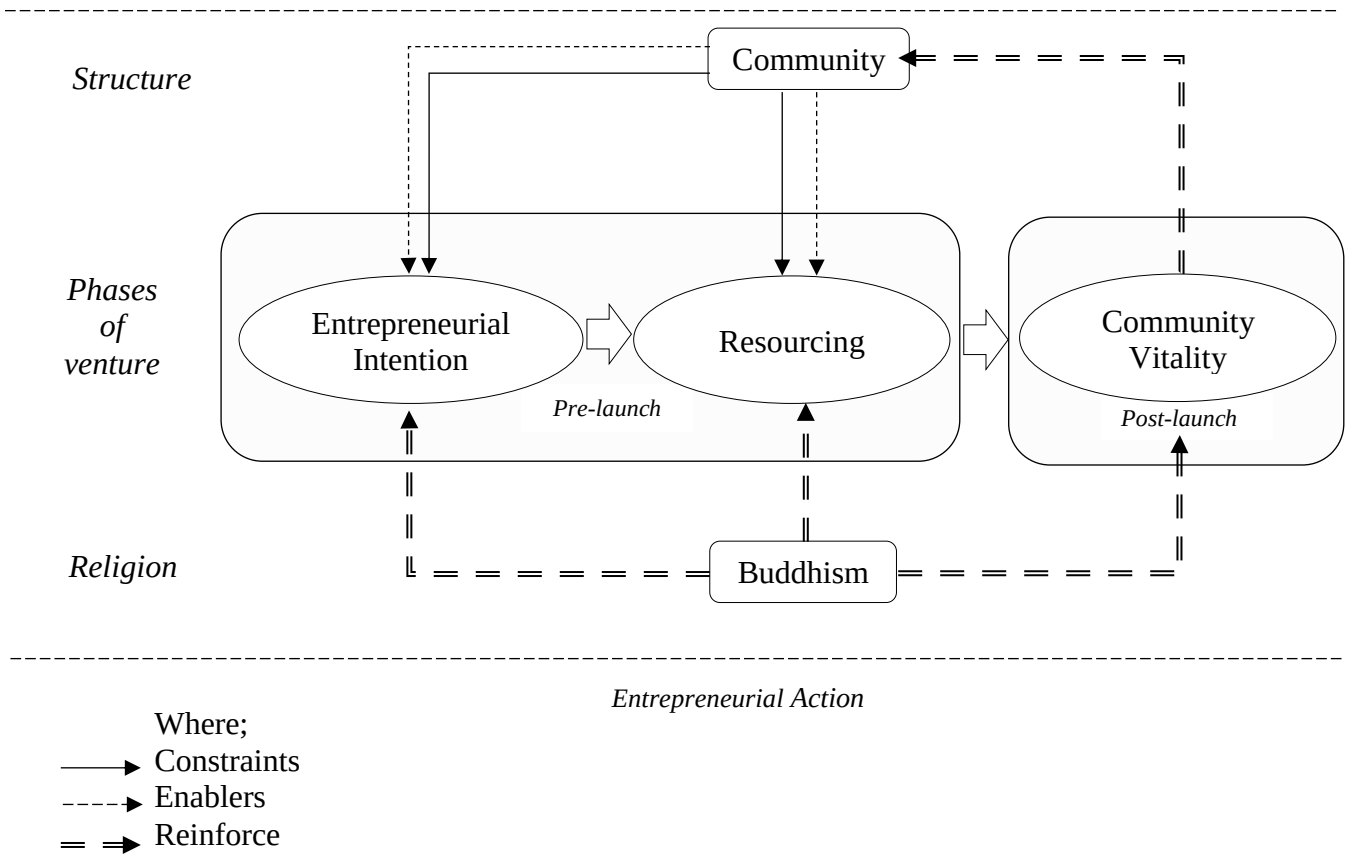
8.3 Entrepreneurial Action

The above section described a model that conceptualises the findings that resulted from the attempt to answer the overarching research question: ***How do community and Buddhism interact with entrepreneurial action?*** This overarching research question has enabled a contribution to one of the more compelling challenges in entrepreneurship, that is, of moving away from the singular approach (Audretsch et al., 2020) to a contextual view of entrepreneurship. Existing literature has substantially focused on a singular view of examining entrepreneurship and it does not establish sufficient boundaries for entrepreneurship. These

[20] The economic vitality of a community refers to its members' personal financial position, which is determined by his/her income of employment, investments in trading assets such as stocks and bonds, and the economic condition of the country.
[21] Social vitality of a community refers to the lifestyle of its community members, which is determined by the level of education, health, happiness, family size, etc.
[22] The natural environment encompasses all living and non-living things occurring naturally.

singular views include psychological traits, behaviour, and opportunity approaches. Therefore, this research argued that entrepreneurial action occurs through interactions between community and religious contexts (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020). This argument embraced three notions. *First*, entrepreneurship involves a series of entrepreneurial actions (Shepherd, 2015), *second*, entrepreneurial actions interact within the context (Kitching & Rouse, 2017) and *third*, entrepreneurial action requires agency (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). In this section, the chapter illuminates the research findings to theorise entrepreneurial action (see below Figure 45).

Figure 45: Entrepreneurial Action



Source: Research data

This following section discusses the central argument of entrepreneurial action in this thesis – that entrepreneurial actions interact within the context (Kitching & Rouse, 2017). The immediate spatial contexts that this research is contextualised equates to structural (i.e., community) and religion (i.e., Buddhism) contexts (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020).

8.3.1 Entrepreneurial Action and Context

8.3.1.1 Structural Context of Entrepreneurial Action: Community

In this research, the definition of a community favoured a broad perspective, and it is defined as enduring relationships among actors, often with geographic bounds (Freeman & Audia, 2006). Consistent with this definition, data from this study suggested two community types – that of close (i.e., family) and distant (i.e., social) community members. The former refers to the community that the entrepreneur is surrounded by and consists of parents, spouse, and children. The latter includes any community member who is outside the immediate family unit, such as other relatives, friends, colleagues, peers, etc. This research contributes to a broader understanding of community that departs from the traditional definition based on mere geographic locations (Marquis et al., 2011).

Family-Community Interaction with Entrepreneurial Action: Entrepreneurial Intention

The literature recognises intention as "the best single predictor of an individual's behaviour" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 369). Recent studies of entrepreneurial intentions suggest that more attention should be paid on how context shapes entrepreneurial intention (Schmutzler, Andonova, & Diaz-Serrano, 2019). Donaldson (2019) adds that in doing so scholars can develop best-fit models and assemblages of interactive capacities for entrepreneurship. However, untangling the nexus between context and entrepreneurial intention remains a challenge (Thornton, Ribeiro-Soriano, & Urbano, 2011). The current

research provides insights into untangling this puzzle. According to the findings from this study, entrepreneurial intention interacts with and is shaped by the community (i.e., family and social) and Buddhism contexts. This section discusses how *family community* interact with entrepreneurial intentions.

According to the findings, entrepreneurial intention is enabled and constrained by family communities. These findings contribute to clarify the blurry association between family influence on entrepreneurship literature (Vladasel et al., 2020). The family's role in *enabling* entrepreneurial intentions captured instrumental, non-instrumental, and indecisive support mechanisms. These supports for entrepreneurial intention are considered essential, given that the family is the most immediate and earliest community influencing the entrepreneurial career aspirations of an individual (Meoli et al., 2020). This immediacy of family provides a salient context for the formation of entrepreneurial preferences (Vladasel et al., 2020).

Instrumental support included tangible support. Literature regarding family support for entrepreneurial intention mostly favours this dimension. The importance of family members as an important channel for sourcing resources to realise entrepreneurial intention is evident in the literature. For example, a study (see; Edelman, Manolova, Shirokova, & Tsukanova, 2016) conducted in the context of graduate entrepreneurship shows that family play a pivotal role for graduates who decide to start their own ventures, providing instrumental support in terms of financial and social capital relationships.

Findings from this current study regarding the family instrumental support for entrepreneurial intention extends this current understanding. This research captured the essential role played by instrumental support on entrepreneurial intention – that of family instrumental support to realise entrepreneurial intentions of the individuals who are currently engaged in white-collar jobs or are wage earners (e.g., Bag producer, Participant U).

Individuals may be more encouraged to pursue white-collar jobs in contexts where it is considered legitimised. The ones who inculcate entrepreneurial intentions parallel to wage employment may withdraw and engage fully to realise entrepreneurial intention if they found it attractive. Instrumental support is considered pivotal in realising their entrepreneurial intentions, it can aid one to leave current employment and fully engage in the entrepreneurial activity.

Non-instrumental support included intangible support. The findings of this study suggested that non-instrumental support is as important as instrumental support, especially during the entrepreneurial intention phase. Non-instrumental support in terms of emotional assistance is considered vital at the stage of entrepreneurial intention, as it is the gestation period of a venture (Chen & He, 2011). According to the findings, families offered non-instrumental support in terms of encouragement. The literature provides consistent evidence regarding the importance of non-instrumental support. As Chang, Memili, Chrisman, Kellermanns, and Chua (2009) concur, the encouragement given by family members potentially stimulates entrepreneurial intentions. According to Klyver, Honig, and Steffens (2018) emotional support is relatively more important during the early stages of venture creation.

Findings of the current research regarding non-instrumental support for entrepreneurial intention contribute to advance current understanding, capturing how families enable entrepreneurial intentions. In contexts where family communities are close-knit, family members become more interdependent and *vice versa*. They expect each other to comply with family norms and be rewarded accordingly (Packer, 2008). Living in a family where entrepreneurial careers are considered legitimate may encourage someone who aspires to entrepreneurship, and that influence may be strong due to the interdependence of family

members. Therefore, encouragement offered by family members in a close-knit family potentially stimulates entrepreneurial intentions.

Assistance that is neither intangible nor tangible is termed indecisive support. Data regarding indecisive support indicated that families did not interfere with the participants' entrepreneurial intentions. Family non-interference created freedom for the participants to proceed with their entrepreneurial intentions. Non-interference can be recognised as an enabler because it creates a favourable mind-set and environment for the participant to proceed with their entrepreneurial intentions (e.g., the jewellery maker, Participant Q).

The non-interference of family members and its resulting feeling of freedom may allow enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Enhancing entrepreneurial self-efficacy is an important factor if a person is to overcome constraints from within the community.

Regarding the *constraining* role of families on participants' entrepreneurial intentions, the data suggested two reasons – that of family member's preference for a white-collar career, and their perception of entrepreneurship as an insecure occupation. These two reasons suggest that participants' families are embedded in environments that are not conducive to entrepreneurial intentions, and implies that families hold unfavourable opinions regarding entrepreneurship. Therefore, participants' entrepreneurial intentions are inhibited (e.g., the T-shirt manufacturer, Participant A).

These findings confirm that family norms and values can significantly impact entrepreneurial intention. For example, a family that perceives entrepreneurship as a less legitimate activity (than, say a white-collar job), may not look favourably on a family member's entrepreneurial intention (Kibler, Kautonen, & Fink, 2014). Families are manifested in larger societies. Social communities may exert influence over career choices through family

members. With regard to entrepreneurial career aspirations, it seems reasonable that social communities influence entrepreneurial intentions through families in the form of social norms.

Data suggest that family opposition to participants' entrepreneurial intention is linked to family members' occupational histories (e.g., drop shipping business owner, Participant B). Family members' occupational histories mostly involved governmental jobs (i.e., white-collar careers) and they perceived government jobs as more acceptable than entrepreneurial careers. With this perception, family members opposed entrepreneurial intentions. These findings regarding family opposition suggest that family-related life experience, such as occupational histories, play a significant role in moulding an individual's aspirations for an entrepreneurial career. Similarly, Bronfenbrenner (1986) suggested that family-related life experiences play an essential role in shaping an individual's beliefs, personality, attitudes, and intentions.

In a context where embedded families exist, these constraining roles may be even more influential. In embedded contexts, members share the same structural and cultural norms and expect others to similarly comply. Embeddedness usually comes at a price: to obtain support from embedded agents – that of family members – those who have entrepreneurial intentions may need to comply with certain family-specific norms (Fisher, Kotha, & Lahiri, 2016). The inability to conform to family norms regarding entrepreneurship may result in tension. This tension may result in prospective entrepreneurs experiencing a loss of freedom and feel unable to separate themselves from their communities due to the levelling expectation of the community members (Portes, 1998).

The inability to conform to social norms may inhibit entrepreneurial intentions and lead to sour relationships. For instance, in a family where entrepreneurship is not legitimised, the family members may oppose its members' entrepreneurial intentions. Packer (2008) writes, an individual who is more interdependent with his/her family will be more likely to recognise

themselves with the family and comply with the norms of the family and be rewarded accordingly. Non-compliance with family norms often results in negative consequences such as internal sanctions (e.g., remorse, guilt) or external sanctions (e.g., ostracism, gossip) (Meek, Pacheco, & York, 2010). These negative consequences may create tension for prospective entrepreneurs and inhibit entrepreneurial intentions.

Family-Community Interaction with Entrepreneurial Action: Resourcing

Resourcefulness, which is considered as a central concept of entrepreneurship, is a characteristic that allows entrepreneurs to "get more from less, by identifying novel and clever ways to bring, assemble, and deploy resources" (Williams, Zhao, George, Sonenshein, & Ucbasaran, 2020, p. 1). However, this research finding regarding the family community interaction in mobilising resources has not served this purpose. Because, findings showed that entrepreneurs have not engaged much with family members (i.e., close community) in mobilising resources. Family members only contributed their labour *enabling* participants labour bricolage behaviour. During the second stage of resourcing – that of assembly – family members' interaction was *not* observed. These findings bring an important research implication – that of the variation of the interaction of communities in different phases of the venture, and again highlight the significance of context in the entrepreneurship process.

This variation of the interaction of community members during different phases of the venture can be due to many reasons. Entrepreneurs may change and develop their networks throughout the phases of the venture with regard to the decisions and activities they face (Klyver, 2007). Accordingly, less interaction with family members during the assembly stage compared to the entrepreneurial intention phase might be a result of the decisions that distinguish these phases. Entrepreneurs may require more emotional support during the entrepreneurial intention phase, thus family members' interaction during the entrepreneurial

intention phase is higher than during the resourcing phase. As the venture moves from intention to resourcing, the venture becomes more divergent requiring more formal networks than informal ones (i.e., families), resulting in them to deviate from families to social communities.

In addition, existing literature has provided some further evidence on why an entrepreneur may not interact with family members during the resource assembly phase. There can be disadvantages of sourcing resources from family members. For example, Clough et al. (2019) explain two disadvantages of resourcing a venture through family members. They recognise that relying on family members during resource assembly is like a double-edged sword as it sets up a mutual obligation toward family, allowing them to benefit from the new venture, for instance, giving equity stake to family members who helped with resourcing (Kotha & George, 2012). Further, Uzzi (1997) explains that reliance on family members for resources prevent access to more diverse resources.

Contrary to the above literature on why an entrepreneur may not interact with family members during resource assembly, some studies provide evidence that family plays an important role for entrepreneurs because of a robust association between family embeddedness and entrepreneurial actions (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). This evidence shows the advantages of sourcing resources from family members. Family embeddedness explains the importance of family roles and relationships and focuses on an exchange mechanism between family members and entrepreneurs (Aldrich & Kim, 2007). In such an exchange process, entrepreneurs mobilise resources from their family members that benefit their ventures, while family members receive social and economic benefits (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). In addition, highlighting the immediacy of family members, Hanlon and Saunders (2007) discover family members are the most frequent providers of resources to nascent entrepreneurial ventures.

According to Zhang, Wong, and Soh (2004), family members play an essential role in providing financial resources.

The two paragraphs above have discussed the contrasting views between the findings of this study and the existing literature on family community involvement in resource mobilisation – that of the advantages and disadvantages of sourcing resources from family members. These contrasting views indicate the non-congruence of the literature on the association between family interaction and mobilising resources of an emergent venture (Xu, Kellermanns, Jin, & Xi, 2020). Clough et al. (2019) have suggested an important research direction i.e., to determine which communities are approached and when an entrepreneur initiates a search for resources. Findings of the current study added impetus to this call. It found a variation in the interaction of communities with an emergent venture in its different phases. Family members interaction with the resourcing phase is low compared to the first phase – that of entrepreneurial intention. During the resourcing phase, the family community interacted enabling resources for bricolage behaviour – that of the first stage of resourcing phase. This may be because entrepreneurs require more emotional support during the phase of entrepreneurial intention. As the venture moves from intention to resourcing, the venture becomes more divergent requiring more formal networks than informal ones (i.e., families), resulting in them moving from families to social communities. The current research's findings along with Clough et al. (2019) – that of variation in the interaction of the family communities in different phases, signals an important future research direction. This research direction may provide implications for the inconclusive association between family and entrepreneurship literature (Xu et al., 2020).

Social-Community Interaction with Entrepreneurial Action: Entrepreneurial Intention

As mentioned earlier, findings indicated that social (i.e., distant) community both *enabled* and *constrained* entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial intention. Regarding the social enabling role, findings indicated instrumental and non-instrumental support mechanisms. University lecturers' and teachers' non-instrumental support was a significant facet. Findings indicated that these people (i.e., lecturers) encouraged the participants to proceed with their entrepreneurial intentions (e.g., bag producer, Participant U).

Previous studies have also recognised the importance of lecturers' role in realising entrepreneurial intentions. For example, Meoli et al. (2020) argue that university professors who engage in entrepreneurship might assist students to translate their entrepreneurial intentions to start-ups. Hayter, Lubynsky, and Maroulis (2016) have also confirmed this notion. Findings of the current research confirm existing views that lecturers can be a salient force in realising entrepreneurial intentions of individuals. Lecturers usually play a mentor role, providing valuable information, practical skills, and networking that are essential to convert entrepreneurial intention to a start-up. Encouragement reinforced by the lecturers' skills and knowledge may be a significant force in realising entrepreneurial intentions.

Taken collectively, instrumental and non-instrumental support mechanisms of social community indicate a sense of acceptability of entrepreneurial intentions that they are valued and cared for (Xiongfei, Khan, Zaigham, & Khan, 2019). In addition, social support offers confidence to individuals for their entrepreneurial intent that sufficient support will be provided in times of need (Raza, Khan, Khan, Ali, & Bano, 2019). Social support develops a sense of security that eventually leads individuals to make better decisions (Langford, Bowsher, Maloney, & Lillis, 1997). Following these ideas of social support, it can be mentioned that social community members can exert a strong power in realising the entrepreneurial intentions

of individuals. According to Younis et al. (2020) social support strengthens entrepreneurial intentions.

The *constraining* role of social communities on entrepreneurial intention resulted in the participants regarding social communities as not being positively disposed towards entrepreneurship. The first reason cited was the prevalence of less developed cultures. Data suggested that less developed cultures exist in communities due to the pervasiveness of risk-averse behaviour in society (e.g., the owner of a computer software engineering company, Participant D). The second reason cited was the negative impression of entrepreneurship among social communities (e.g., T-shirt manufacturer, Participant A). Like family communities, social communities also preferred white-collar careers, thus, entrepreneurial intention was inhibited. These two reasons can be regarded as unfavourable social norms held in social communities regarding entrepreneurship that constrained entrepreneurial intentions.

The literature suggests that unfavourable social norms are more likely to inhibit entrepreneurial intentions in collective communities than individualist communities (Kristiansen & Indarti, 2011). Asian contexts are considered more collective than western contexts (Power, Schoenherr, & Samson, 2010). In collective societies, members are closely related to each other based on a shared identity; shared moral and social values, and norms. Those shared identities may influence the behaviour of individuals. Regarding career aspirations, in a context where white-collar jobs are considered legitimised, entrepreneurial aspirations may be inhibited. In this way, social legitimacy associated with a supportive environment for entrepreneurship could strengthen an individual's certainty of entrepreneurial intention (Etzioni, 1987).

As Dana (1995) writes, the likelihood that a potential entrepreneur will translate entrepreneurial intention to a start-up is very much influenced by the supportiveness of the

community in which the prospective entrepreneur is situated. Therefore, the social norms of a community need to promote a perception of a supportive environment to encourage entrepreneurial intentions (Meek et al., 2010). As in the literature, the findings of the current study confirm that the social legitimacy of entrepreneurship in communities affects entrepreneurial intentions. Communities that hold conducive norms regarding entrepreneurship may enhance individuals' certainty of entrepreneurial intention and *vice versa*.

Social-Community Interaction with Entrepreneurial Action: Resourcing

Resources are the foundations of a firm's existence and growth (George, 2005). A solid resource foundation may enhance the certainty of a venture's launch. According to the findings of the current research, social (i.e., distant) community members seem to play an essential role in providing resources to equip the venture. These findings reinforce the idea that partnerships yield resourceful behaviours (Moss, Dahik Loor, & Diaz Parada, 2021). As mentioned above, this study's conceptualisation of the resourcing phase consists of two stages – that of bricolage and assembly. The social community members' interaction in bricolage behaviour *only* served the purpose of building the initial resource foundation for the venture. Building a resource foundation in terms of human capital is considered essential for a start-up. For instance, a recent study in the context of social enterprises discovered that human capital is crucial in the start-ups as well as the development stages of a venture (Cheung et al., 2019). In general, human capital is identified as the most critical resource that entrepreneurs possess (Hitt, Bierman, Shimizu, & Kochhar, 2001).

According to the findings, this initial human capital foundation is strengthened at the assembly stage – that of the second stage of resourcing – as social community members *further* interacted with resource mobilisation. They have assisted entrepreneurs to expand human capital and add financial capital to the venture. Human capital refers to labour and knowledge

(Clough et al., 2019) that are admissible to economic activity. Mobilising human capital is essential as it relates to venture survival (Linder, Lechner, & Pelzel, 2020). Financial capital refers to cash, grants, or loans (Clough et al., 2019) that are admissible to economic activity. Even though mobilising financial capital is essential for entrepreneurial entry (Sahasranamam & Nandakumar, 2020), Linder et al. (2020) argue that an overreliance on it does not guarantee a venture's survival.

Literature regarding the resource mobilisation of a start-up focuses on the network perspective. Entrepreneurs search for resources within pre-existing networks that include family members and close friends (Hanlon & Saunders, 2007). As Ruef et al. (2003) discovered, an entrepreneur's resource mobilisation is constrained by their personal background and the neighbourhood in which they grew up. Only individuals born to privileged families – wealthy families, high-status education, and prosperous neighbourhoods – have access to rich resources (Hallen, 2008).

However, as Clough et al. (2019) understand, research regarding the resources search of an emergent venture has not been explicitly conceptualised. Instead, it is *implicitly* assumed that entrepreneurs resource mobilisation is restricted to the close ties (i.e., networks) of the entrepreneur. The findings of this study are consistent with this notion. It was found that entrepreneurs expand their networks to social communities (i.e., distant ties) that include community members that are beyond their close ties in mobilising resources (e.g., the cane furniture manufacturer, Participant N). Furthermore, there are two types of roles played by community members – that of direct and intermediary roles – in enabling resources. The former refers to community members' direct assistance by providing resources. The latter refers to community assistance by forming links with another parties to access resources.

These findings regarding the roles (i.e., direct or intermediary) played by distant community members indicate the non-linear nature of the resource mobilisation of a start-up. The relationships built within and beyond personal levels with the social community members in expanding the resource base have strengthened the likelihood that entrepreneurial intention translates into a start-up. These findings collectively suggest that the resource mobilisation of an emergent venture can even expand beyond personal networks to formal networks that consist of distant community members. Resource mobilisation is not necessarily restricted to pre-existing networks. It is not limited to the personal background and neighbourhood in which the entrepreneur grew up, and not only the individuals who are born to privileged families can access rich resources.

The community members who had enabled resources at the stage of resource assembly are social community members – that of distant community members. Even though family community members (i.e., close community) are considered an essential source in generating resources for a start-up (Brush, Greene, & Hart, 2001), this study found less involvement of family members. As mentioned earlier, this contradiction calls for future research attention regarding the variation of the type of community involvement in different phases of a venture. It may be that as the venture moves from intention to resourcing, the venture become more divergent requiring more formal networks than informal ones (i.e., families), resulting a movement from families to social communities. These formal networks may facilitate an emergent venture's future investment prospects.

Despite the community role in enabling resource assembly, findings indicated that the community interacted by *constraining* resource assembly also. There were three forms of constraint - the reluctance to provide finance, lack of encouragement, and pressure to relocate.

Emergent ventures are resource constrained entities. Findings of the current research showed that entrepreneurs experience resistance from resource providers due to the venture's newness. Stinchcombe (1965) suggests that emergent ventures do not have a proven track record of business success and potential external resource providers find it hard to understand the venture's future prospects (Gimenez-Fernandez, Sandulli, & Bogers, 2020). Potential external resource providers are regarded as resource controllers (Hanlon & Saunders, 2007). Hence entrepreneurs need to convince these parties to gain access to resources (Clough et al., 2019).

The extant literature provides some useful strategies regarding how entrepreneurs can convince resource controllers to gain access to resources. For example, start-ups can establish ties with important organisations that help to alleviate liabilities of newness (Venkataraman & Van de Ven, 1998). Such relationships may increase the legitimacy of the start-up by signalling to resource providers that it is worthy of resources. Another strategy includes limiting information asymmetry barriers perceived by resource providers (Djupdal & Westhead, 2015). Villanueva et al. (2012) add that some resource providers are reluctant to offer resources due to incomplete information and uncertainty. Therefore, entrepreneurs need to provide complete information to resource controllers or external resource providers to signal the legitimacy of the emergent venture.

This study showed how entrepreneurs mitigated the liabilities of newness that they experienced during the resource assembly stage. For example, entrepreneurs experienced that established companies refused to buy their products as their ventures were not registered at the time of resource assembly. This liability was avoided by obtaining certification of legitimacy (i.e., registering the venture) (Djupdal & Westhead, 2015) that attracted the external resource providers to the emergent venture.

Findings also showed that community members pressurised entrepreneurs to relocate their production facilities due to the inconveniences they (the community members) experienced. The production facilities were initially home-based, and that upset the neighbours. However, this liability was avoided by moving the production facilities to an industrial zone. The extant literature provides evidence regarding the importance of establishing emergent ventures in geographic areas that contain industries because it benefits start-ups with different sources of knowledge (Saxenian, 1990), entrepreneurial friendly environments (Glasmeier, 2006), and environments for idea exchange and creativity (Pouder & StJohn, 1996).

Overall, this study showed an interesting characteristic that led the entrepreneurs to avoid the liabilities related to the newness of the firm. That characteristic is the role of the entrepreneur's Buddhist religious upbringing. Their *deterministic action* played an essential role in managing the tensions experienced during the resource assembly stage. The discussion of this regard is illuminated in a section below (see *Buddhism Interaction in Entrepreneurial Action: Resourcing*).

Entrepreneurial Impact on Community: Community Vitality

The above sections discussed how the actions of entrepreneurs are shaped by community interaction. Community interaction *enables* and *constrains* the actions of entrepreneurs during the pre-launch phase of the venture – that of entrepreneurial intention and resourcing. Entrepreneurs are embedded in communities, and they are involved with and draw on communities. The communities influence entrepreneurship via norms, beliefs, and perceptions regarding entrepreneurship. The views adopted by communities can be both helpful and detrimental to entrepreneurial action. Discussions in this area may help to unveil new theoretical developments on the social context of entrepreneurship (Dana et al., 2020).

This chapter continues to discuss the post-launch entrepreneurial action. According to the findings, post-launch mechanisms showed that communities are strengthened by the actions of the entrepreneur. This post-launch entrepreneurial action equates to the phase where the entrepreneur makes positive contributions to improve community vitality. From the general definitional point of view, community vitality refers to a community's ability to sustain itself. Yet little is known on the context sustainability strategies of emergent ventures (Fischer, Brettel, & Mauer, 2020).

The notion of community vitality stems from the idea that entrepreneurs do more for communities beyond the traditional focus on economic growth (Fortunato & Alter, 2015); that is by improving the vitality of communities. According to Scott (2010, p. 15) community vitality means "the set of relationships, capacity and creativity that exist in a community that helps the community as a whole to sustain itself, solve common problems, and to express its unique identity". Findings of this study indicated that entrepreneurs' actions serving the communities offered excellent potential for improving *economic* (e.g., the owner of a computer software engineering company, Participant D), *social* (e.g., the chairman of a holding company, Participant C) and *natural environmental* (e.g., the water-care company owner, Participant R) vitalities.

Few scholars have been able to draw on any systematic research on community vitality. Findings of the current study confirm and extend this limited literature. For example, Flora (2009) argues that entrepreneurial action that leads to strengthening the vitality of communities must attend to more than economic aspects of communities and should include human, environmental, and social aspects. As she understands, these components of community vitality make communities sustainable. The current research findings regarding community vitality confirm these notions because they unveiled economic, social, and natural environment

aspects. Furthermore, these findings contributed to extend Flora's understanding of community vitality, as entrepreneurs' actions to improve the vitality of communities captured an altruistic dimension based on being compassionate to others (see section below: *Buddhism Interaction in Entrepreneurial Action: Community Vitalities*). Participants' altruistic acts depicted that they worked to improve the communities without expecting a return for themselves. These altruistic acts were exhibited regardless of how successful the business was. Some ventures contributed to improve the vitalities of communities soon after the venture was launched. Literature regarding the causes of altruistic intentions to improve community vitality is scant. More research is needed to clarify the boundaries between entrepreneurship and social context.

As mentioned earlier, findings suggested three facets of community vitality – that of economic, social, and natural environmental vitalities. The economic vitality of a community refers to its members' personal financial position. An individual's financial position is determined by his/her income of employment, investments in trading assets such as stocks and bonds, and the economic condition of the country. Altruistic acts improved the economic vitality of community members such as shareholders, suppliers, customers, and societal members. As Korsching (2004) discovered, entrepreneurs take actions to strengthen the economy of communities due to the reason that if the community actively works, entrepreneurs have a chance to operate ventures profitably. However, the findings of this study do not support this notion. The participants do not expect any return for themselves, instead, their actions were purely altruistic to elevate the economic wellbeing of community members.

The social vitality of a community refers to the lifestyle of its community members. An individual's lifestyle is determined by the level of education, health, happiness, family size etc. Similar to actions to improve economic vitalities, the acts to improve social vitality also exhibited an altruistic dimension. Actions to improve social vitality suggest that not all human

activities related to entrepreneurship are linked to business. Rather, some actions are related to benevolence (Roberts & Woods, 2005). Developing countries currently experience several social issues in local communities such as poverty, drug abuse, political corruption, anti-social behaviour etc. Therefore, entrepreneurs in developing countries may be more inclined to contribute to improve the social vitality of communities with a central social purpose (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006).

The natural environment includes all living and non-living things that occur naturally. Natural environmental vitality comprises goals and altruistic acts implemented by the participants to protect the natural environment where the communities are manifested. Therefore, goals and acts to protect the natural environment are essential to ensure the sustainability of communities. Findings regarding the natural environmental vitality show that participants' goals and acts reinforce the creation of a sustainable base for the preservation of natural resources. Acts to improve the natural environmental are essential as they directly impact on community members, as community and the natural environment manifest and evolve in a dynamic interdependence (Gurău & Dana, 2018).

The literature regarding the dynamics between community and natural environment has primarily discussed economic perspectives (Anderson & Huggins, 2008). For instance, Hart and Milstein (1999) examine market imperfections, flawed pricing mechanisms, and firm inefficiencies that serve as opportunities for entrepreneurs to involve in market correction towards environmental wellbeing as an act of creative destruction. Although these theoretical contributions advance the natural environmental vitality from an economic perspective, findings of this research showed that the participants worked to improve the natural environmental vitality due to altruism.

Taken collectively, these discussions regarding the economic, social, and natural environmental vitalities imply that entrepreneurs are highly in motivated to improve the vitality of surrounding communities given the fact that their roots are in the community, and they had a commitment to that community. This motivation may have led them to exhibit altruistic behaviour. Furthermore, the findings showed that the acts to improve community vitality are informed by the participants' religion – that of Buddhism. It was discovered that altruistic acts are based on the premise of being compassionate to others. This is further discussed in a later section *Buddhism Interaction in Entrepreneurial Action: Community Vitalities*.

In the context of emergent ventures, community vitality seems a very interesting research direction. Findings of this current study unveiled that contributing to improve community vitality was an important aspect of the ventures in spite of the tension that entrepreneurs experienced during the resourcing stage (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, these actions showed that altruistic acts were informed by being compassionate to others. These findings suggested that community vitality is relevant for the Buddhist religion as well. The extant literature regarding responsible actions in the context of emergent ventures reveals contrasting views. For example, Wang and Bansal (2012) found that liabilities of newness of emergent ventures constrain the capacity to take responsible action. Moreover, liabilities of newness cause ventures to suffer and face uncertain prospects (Liu et al., 2019; Shepherd, Douglas, & Shanley, 2000). These contradictions between the findings of the current research and extant literature suggest the need for scholarly inquiry to better understand the context of responsible action of emergent ventures. Such inquiries may clarify the unexplored boundaries of the context of sustainability strategies of emergent ventures (Fischer et al., 2020; Ye & Li, 2020).

8.3.1.2 Religion Context of Entrepreneurial Action: Buddhism

This section discusses the remainder of the central argument of entrepreneurial action in this thesis - entrepreneurial actions interact within the context (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020). The earlier section discussed how community contexts interact with the actions of entrepreneurs. This section pays attention to how the Buddhist religion context interacts with entrepreneurship. Religion constitutes an essential cultural component that pervades every aspect of society (Shyan Fam, Waller, & Zafer Erdogan, 2004). Its relevance for entrepreneurship is relatively neglected by the research and leads to an inadequate understanding of entrepreneurial action (B. R Smith et al., 2019). As Pavlovich and Markman (in press) argue, research into entrepreneurship and religion has been avoided, possibly because it challenges the rationality of science. But when it is excluded, research becomes partial and incomplete.

This research attends to this critique and provides valuable insights to its intersection. The interaction between Buddhist religion and entrepreneurial actions suggested that religion manifests in the entrepreneurial sphere by guiding entrepreneurs to realise their goals. The study identified that Buddhist tenets such as discernment, right livelihood, determination, and the important role of compassion assists entrepreneurs to realise their goals. This chapter focuses on the religion context of entrepreneurial action and the role of Buddhism in each phase of entrepreneurial action.

Buddhism Interaction with Entrepreneurial Action: Entrepreneurial Intention

Discernment

As discussed earlier – community interaction with entrepreneurial intention – communities being both helpful and detrimental to participants' entrepreneurial intention

created tension for the participants. The participants' religion was helpful in eliminating these tensions. The Buddhist tenet – that of discernment – played a significant role in eliminating the tensions caused by the community (e.g., the chairman of a high-tech company, Participant F). Discernment refers to the Buddhist teaching that the Lord Buddha advised in Kālāma Sutta[23] that one's striving for the goal must depend only on himself/herself and not seek others to lean on[24]. The Buddha taught that one should believe only what is true in the light of his/her awareness. It is taught not to subject oneself to authority and popular views, but to access what is morally wholesome to oneself (Ng, 2020). After thorough investigation and analysis, when one finds that anything agrees with reason, and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept and live up to it (Johnson, 2002).

The quality of being discerning assisted the participants to navigate the tensions imposed by communities. The participants reviewed community feedback (i.e., support and opposition of community members) regarding their entrepreneurial intentions and arrived at a decision that was compatible with their values. Some participants had reservations about obtaining feedback. In this way, the quality of being discerning assisted participants to mitigate the effects of the tension and proceed with their entrepreneurial intentions. Fry (1994) understands the quality of being discerning as critical thinking. As he explains, Buddha taught individuals to not to accept things uncritically. Instead, one should judge ideas by himself/herself after seeking real relevant experience to test a notion for its validity.

These research findings regarding discernment contribute to entrepreneurial intention literature. In entrepreneurship literature, the extent to which a nascent entrepreneur cares about the opinions of friends, role models, or family members for his/her intention of creating a

[23] Kālāma Sutta is used to advocate prudence using proper logical reasoning arguments for inquiries in the practice that relates to the discipline of seeking truth, wisdom and knowledge whether it is religious or not.
[24] Dhammapada verse 160

venture refers to the motivation to comply (Kolvereid, 2017). Motivation to comply is one of the components of social norms in the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 2002) and it is a predictor of entrepreneurial intention (Nabi, Liñán, Iakovleva, Kolvereid, & Stephan, 2011). In this way, findings of the current research extend the understanding of the motivation to comply from a Buddhist perspective. Individuals who believe only what is true in the light of their awareness may have a lesser motivation to comply. Future research regarding the role of Buddhism in reviewing community opinions in realising entrepreneurial intentions may be plausible to advance the understanding of the theory of planned behaviour.

Right Livelihood

The other Buddhist tenet related to entrepreneurial intention is right livelihood. Findings regarding right livelihood showed two aspects. *First*, right livelihood influenced the entrepreneurs to incorporate ethical business conduct into their entrepreneurial intentions. They intended to engage in a business that does not cheat customers. Some participants realised the importance of engaging in an ethical business because of their belief that engaging un unethical business practices generates unwholesome karma. In Buddhism, an ethical decision involves avoiding deliberately harming other creatures or earning a living in a harmful manner. According to Buddhism, enlightenment is the highest humanly attainable level and can be achieved by acts that benefit others (Liu et al., 2019), that is, by engaging in ethical business. Also, karma suggests that the way that Buddhist entrepreneurs treat customers will come back to them in some way (Marques, 2012). Embracing these conceptions of karma and ethical business, Buddhist entrepreneurs may have been encouraged to care about customers, rather than merely developing an entrepreneurial intention that only creates monetary returns.

Second, right livelihood influenced entrepreneurs to refrain from engaging in entrepreneurial intentions such as, as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks,

poisons, killing animals, cheating etc. According to the findings, disengaging from these entrepreneurial intentions is voluntarily, and Buddhist entrepreneurs do not recognise this disengagement as a cost. For example, the chairman of a dairy company (Participant K) declined the opportunity to invest in a farm due to the eventual death of cattle.

However, shaping entrepreneurial intentions by not engaging in certain business activities can have a negative economic impact. Because right livelihood limits one's potential to invest in a wide array of venturing intentions, it provides what businesses to pursue on. Right livelihood may influence Buddhist entrepreneurs to search and engage in entrepreneurial intentions that are desirable for Buddhist communities. Entrepreneurial intentions are likely to be reduced when surrounding communities attack venturing intentions, undermining social desirability (Dodd & Gotsis, 2007). As Weick (1979) writes, individuals enact rather than react to the surroundings in which they are embedded. In this way, right livelihood may have a negative economic impact, particularly in a Buddhist context. Similarly, Dana (1995) argues that socially embedded conceptions of right livelihood may work against entrepreneurial intentions, thereby negatively affect a nation's economic development.

Taken collectively, these analyses imply that the concept of right livelihood may have an impact on both individual businesses and economy. Right livelihood assists entrepreneurs to shape their entrepreneurial intentions and to structure their business taking into account religious principles. For example, right livelihood provides guidance to develop ethical entrepreneurial intentions that care about customers.

Entrepreneurial intentions shaped by the conceptions of right livelihood may have a negative impact on the economy as Buddhist entrepreneurs may be inclined to search and engage in entrepreneurial intentions that are desirable for Buddhist communities. Entrepreneurs' disengagement in businesses such as trading in arms and lethal weapons,

intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, cheating etc may be expected by the surrounding communities and venturing intentions that fall under these categories may be discouraged due to the social undesirability. In this way, right livelihood may work against entrepreneurial intentions influencing negatively on a country's economy.

Buddhism Interaction in Entrepreneurial Action: Resourcing

Determination

The Buddhist tenet that is associated with the resourcing phase of entrepreneurial action is determination. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna) is one of the perfections (*parami*, Pali; *paramita*, Sanskrit) originated from Buddhahood. Determination assists one to clarify what is necessary for enlightenment and focus upon it, and to eliminate whatever is in the way. It is a resolve to continue along the path no matter what obstacles present themselves. Entrepreneurs who showed determination during the phase of resourcing were able to eliminate community tensions and proceed with establishing the venture.

Being determined is considered a beneficial tenet, especially during the resourcing phase of a venture. Usually, entrepreneurs do not possess all the necessary resources to launch the venture. They may need to form links and mobilise resources held by external parties. These external parties are resource holders (Villanueva et al., 2012) and entrepreneurs need to attract the attention of these resource holders and convince them to allow the entrepreneur to deploy the resources to build the venture (Clough et al., 2019). However, attracting this attention is not an easy task. Resource holders resist deploying resources owing to the liabilities of newness of the venture – the lack of proven track-record, success, and credibility (Djupdal & Westhead, 2015). These liabilities of newness are strong enough to hamper venturing aspirations. Therefore, entrepreneurs try to find ways to innovate, create and to overcome the liabilities of newness (Williams & Shepherd, 2016).

According to this study, the way that entrepreneurs avoided the liabilities of newness during the resourcing phase included a deterministic response. Identifying a way to gather resources is an essential aspect of entrepreneurial action (Michaelis, Scheaf, Carr, & Pollack, 2020). There is a considerable amount of research in this area. For instance, previous research show that entrepreneurs will enact resourceful behaviours as a deterministic response to environmental constraints (Corbett & Katz, 2013; Grichnik, Brinckmann, Singh, & Manigart, 2014). Lussier (1995) sees determination is an entrepreneurial trait that leads to venture success.

While the extant literature has advanced the perspectives of resourcefulness of firms, knowledge is still scant (Michaelis et al., 2020). The current study added important information, particularly in the context of Buddhist religion. Its findings suggested that religion manifests in the entrepreneurial sphere and guides entrepreneurs to realise their goals. The deterministic action has assisted entrepreneurs to overcome the tensions imposed by community members. As cultural discourses are essential components of entrepreneurial action (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020), Future research may add insights to unravel the association between religion and entrepreneurship.

Buddhism Interaction in Entrepreneurial Action: Community Vitalities

Compassion

The previous sections discussed the interaction of Buddhism in pre-launch entrepreneurial actions: entrepreneurial intention and resourcing. The interaction of Buddhism in the last phase of entrepreneurial action – that of community vitality – is discussed in this section. According to the findings, post-launch entrepreneurial actions are informed by entrepreneurs' Buddhist upbringing. These findings provided two essential research implications that advance the current understanding of entrepreneurship.

First, the results from this research extended the current understanding of compassion in entrepreneurship research. The extant literature recognises compassion as an emotional response of caring for and willingness to alleviate suffering (Weng et al., 2013). In Buddhist philosophy, compassion is not only seen as an emotional response but also a response founded on the reason which is embedded in an ethical framework concerned with the selfless intention of freeing others from suffering. In his work, Shepherd (2015) highlighted the need for research incorporating entrepreneurial action in a broader view of compassion including the suffering of humans, animals, communities, and the natural environment. He argued that this broad view of compassion and suffering may extend the boundaries of both entrepreneurship and positive organisational psychology. The current research's findings are in congruence with these notions. It found that not only do entrepreneurs contribute to alleviate the suffering of human beings in terms of economic and social vitalities, but they also pay attention to improve the natural environment where people live. For the participants, making positive contributions to improve community vitality was an important objective..

One recent study that attempted to complement Shepherd's (2015) idea of broadening the research on compassion is that of Engel et al. (2020). They found compassion was a significant predictor for entrepreneurial decisions involving an ethical balancing act between concerns for *economic* and *environmental* sustainability. However, single studies contributing to the broader view that includes social, economic, and natural-environmental wellbeing are scant. The findings of the current study were able to provide implications to this area of research.

Findings also suggested that the entrepreneurs' compassionate acts to improve community vitality are purely altruistic. According to Cheng (2015), altruistic behaviour is motivated by being compassionate to others. Altruism and compassion are pure demarcations

to differentiate entrepreneurs who intend to make contributions to society, from commercial entrepreneurs. While many studies provide evidence regarding commercial entrepreneurship and the associated motivations and drivers, there is little exploration beyond the assertion of altruism in the context of entrepreneurs making societal contribution (Stirzaker, Galloway, Muhonen, & Christopoulos, 2021). Future research regarding the association between compassion and altruism may be plausible because it may contribute to clear the boundaries between commercial and social ventures. Tiwari, Bhat, and Tikoria (2020) describe compassion is a key motivator and suggest that social ventures rate higher on altruism compared to commercial ventures.

Second, another important research implication includes when in the venture life cycle entrepreneurs are likely to improve community vitality. Interestingly, the findings showed that entrepreneurs started to improve community vitality soon after the venture was launched. Altruistic acts were undertaken regardless of how successful the business was. These findings contradict current conceptions of compassion. For example, Dutton, Worline, Frost, and Lilius (2006) argued that only the fortunate aid the less fortunate. Therefore, future research regarding *when* actions to improve community vitality are undertaken is necessary to challenge the current conceptions of compassion and altruism in the context of entrepreneurship.

8.4 Summary of the Theoretical Contributions

8.4.1 Contribution One: Series of Entrepreneurial Actions

The *first* notion of the central argument of entrepreneurial action in this thesis embraces that entrepreneurship involves a series of entrepreneurial actions (Shepherd, 2015). Findings of this research showed that ventures proceed through pre- and post-launch phases that include entrepreneurial intention, resourcing, and community vitality. The first two phases equate to pre-launch phases and the last phase equates to the post-launch phase.

These findings are consistent with the "creation of new venture" perspective of entrepreneurship (Davidsson et al., 2020), as it clearly illustrated the pre-and post-launch phases of venture emergence. According to Shepherd et al. (2020), the phenomenon of the creation of new ventures stands as the central feature of entrepreneurship. The creation of new ventures entails the idea that entrepreneurship is examined in terms of mechanisms or actions of emergence of a venture, rather than focusing on a particular organisational activity (Lichtenstein et al., 2007). In doing so, the perspective that understands the transformative *process* by which goals become outcomes is also introduced into entrepreneurial action research (Baron & Markman, 2018; McMullen & Dimov, 2013). This process perspective is argued to fit well with the study of entrepreneurship, which is primarily an action-based phenomenon (Moroz & Hindle, 2012) that involves pre- and post-launch phases.

As Davidsson and Gruenhagen (2020) write, entrepreneurship research has not made satisfactory progress in relation to the process perspective of new venture creation. The current research's findings added a processual perspective to this call, arguing that ventures emerge through pre- and post-launch entrepreneurial actions - that of entrepreneurial intention, resourcing, and community vitality. In addition, this processual perspective may provide input to clear the boundaries of entrepreneurship where Audretsch et al. (2020) see as a major gap in entrepreneurship research to date. This gap or limitation includes the substantial focus of singular views in conceptualising entrepreneurship.

In this thesis, the *first* pre-launch entrepreneurial action equates to entrepreneurial intention – one's intention to form an entrepreneurial venture via extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. The *second* pre-launch entrepreneurial action refers to resourcing. Resourcing includes bricolage and assembly stages, and is the intermediate step a prospective entrepreneur might take to proceed with his/her entrepreneurial intention. The *third* entrepreneurial action –

community vitality – occurs in the post-launch phase. Community vitality is the entrepreneurial action that the entrepreneur takes to improve the ability of the community to sustain itself. This surprising finding showed that altruistic entrepreneurial acts improve economic, social and natural environmental vitalities.

8.4.2 Contribution Two: Entrepreneurial Action and Context

The *second* notion holds the central argument in this thesis – that entrepreneurial actions interact within a context (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020). A detailed discussion in this regard was presented above (see above Section 8.3.1).

In this study's attempt to unravel the boundaries of entrepreneurship scholarly inquiry the above-mentioned series of entrepreneurial actions (i.e., pre- and post-launch) are not merely discussed as phases of new venture creation. They are contextualised into immediate spatial contexts (i.e., community and Buddhism) in which entrepreneurship takes place. Contextualising the entrepreneurship phenomenon brings validity to research because context frames entrepreneurial activity and shapes its structure and outcomes (McMullen et al., 2020; Müller & Korsgaard, 2018). As Donaldson (2019) recognises, context brings best-fit models of interactive capacities for entrepreneurship phenomenon. Entrepreneurship is a social phenomenon (Shepherd et al., 2019) and the spatial contexts where it occurs may have implications for its action. Research regarding the social context and entrepreneurship can open new theoretical and practical perspectives to better understand the entrepreneurship phenomenon (Dana et al., 2020).

Contextualising this research into a structural (i.e., community) context, this research supported the idea that structure is not a barrier to action; it is interacted in the production of entrepreneurship – constraining and enabling it – and the conditions of social systems govern the association between the two (McMullen et al., 2020). Regarding the religious (i.e.,

Buddhist) context, this research supports the idea that religion guides entrepreneurs to eliminate community constraints to achieve their venturing aspirations. These findings may add important contributions to the relatively neglected field of entrepreneurship and religion research (Pavlovich & Markman, in press).

8.4.3 Contribution Three: Entrepreneurial Action and Agency

The *third* notion of entrepreneurial action is that entrepreneurial action requires agency (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). This notion illuminates the fact that entrepreneurial action is generated by the agents' involvement (McMullen et al., 2020).

Agents' involvement in the production of entrepreneurial action is considered an essential aspect of this thesis. This argument can be positioned providing the conceptions of Archer's (1995) analytical dualism that provides a framework connecting deep social ontology of critical realism to explain how social objects are produced, intentionally or inadvertently, by the agents in contexts (Bhaskar, 1978). According to critical realism, the existence and functioning of social objects are both agent and context dependent; explanations of entrepreneurial action, therefore needs reference to both (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020).

In this thesis, for example, the social context is separated into structure and religion. Structure includes gender, social class, race, ethnicity, organisations and so on (Edwards et al., 2014) which agents are born into. In this research, structure equated to communities (Kitching & Rouse, 2017). Social structural positions enable agents to pursue particular projects or constrain them from doing so (Edwards et al., 2014). Religion equated to the social-cultural system of designated actions. Entrepreneurs and community members (i.e., agents) are variably positioned in regard to relatively enduring structural and religion contexts. These agents interact each other within these contexts producing entrepreneurial action.

The agents' interaction that occurs within the contexts generates causal powers, potentials or capacities (Kitching & Rouse, 2020) for entrepreneurial action to occur, but they require agents to activate them (Archer, 1995). "Such powers may or may not be activated by agents or, if activated, interact with other activated powers to generate different events; and events may or may not be experienced/observed either by the agents studied or by researchers" (Kitching & Rouse, 2020, p. 519). For example, this study found that agents (entrepreneurs and community members) interact within structural and religious contexts. These interactions, for example, generate enabling and constraining roles of community members in the production of entrepreneurial intention. These findings, along with the concept of critical realism suggest that entrepreneurial agency is a necessary condition for entrepreneurial action (McMullen et al., 2020).

8.5 Summary

This chapter presented a framework that offers a coherent conceptual model of entrepreneurial action. The overarching research question of the study - ***How do community and Buddhism interact with entrepreneurial action?*** - has enabled a contribution to one of the more compelling challenges in entrepreneurship by moving away from a singular (Audretsch et al., 2020) to a contextual view of entrepreneurship (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020). Existing literature has mainly focused on a singular view of examining entrepreneurship which limits the potential to understand entrepreneurship fully. These singular views include psychological traits, behaviour, and opportunity approaches. This research argued that entrepreneurial action occurs through interactions between community and religious contexts (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020). This central argument of entrepreneurial action embraced three notions. *First*, entrepreneurship involves a series of entrepreneurial actions (Shepherd, 2015), *second*, entrepreneurial actions interact within a context (Kitching & Rouse, 2017) and *third*, entrepreneurial action requires agency (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). The chapter discussed

the research findings relating to these three concepts in order to theorise entrepreneurial action. Essential research directions and implications pertinent to entrepreneurial action were also discussed.

The final chapter, Chapter Nine, presents the conclusion of the thesis. It will show the theoretical contribution of this study to the literature and explain the implications for practice. Limitations of the research and future research possibilities will also be discussed.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

9.1 Summary of the Thesis

The primary aim of this study was to theorise entrepreneurial action to provide a nuanced understanding for entrepreneurship scholarly inquiry. This motivation has enabled a contribution to one of the more compelling challenges in entrepreneurship, i.e. of moving away from the singular (Audretsch et al., 2020) to a more contextualised view of entrepreneurship. This research argued that entrepreneurial action occurs through interactions between community and religious contexts (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020). This central argument comprised three aspects. *First*, entrepreneurship involves a series of entrepreneurial actions (Shepherd, 2015), *second*, entrepreneurial actions interact with the context (Kitching & Rouse, 2017) and *third*, entrepreneurial action requires agency (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). The central argument of the thesis is examined with the help of the overarching research question for this thesis: ***"How do community and Buddhism interact with entrepreneurial actions?"***

Chapter One provided a foundational overview to the thesis and the development of the overarching research question. Chapter Two reviewed relevant literature on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial action, community, and Buddhism in order to identify the nature and positioning of the research. This chapter critiqued the three distinct approaches to entrepreneurship – trait, behavioural and opportunity – to argue that entrepreneurial action involves a series of actions that interact within the context – that of community and religion. Chapter Three clarified the philosophical position of the study – critical realism – to justify the methodology used to investigate the overarching research question. The chapter also explained that a qualitative research design was adopted for this thesis and multiple case studies with

holistic designs were used as the research technique. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews with 24 Buddhist entrepreneurs and this body of data was transcribed and analysed. Chapter Four explained the geographic context of the study – that of Sri Lanka. The geographic and demographic background, entrepreneurship and Buddhism were explained with the objective of providing an overview of the country where this research was conducted. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven presented the findings in regard to entrepreneurial action. Chapters Five and Six explained the pre-launch entrepreneurial actions – that of entrepreneurial intention and resourcing. These two chapters reported how community and religion contexts interact with pre-launch entrepreneurial actions. Chapter Seven explained the post-launch entrepreneurial action – that of community vitality. This chapter reported how communities impact the actions of entrepreneurs and how religion reinforces these actions. Chapter Eight presented a framework that offers a coherent model of entrepreneurial action. This conceptual model brought structural (i.e., community) and religion (i.e., Buddhism) contexts together to discuss entrepreneurial action.

This is the final chapter of the thesis. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the contribution of this thesis by discussing the research's implications for theory and practice.

9.2 Implications for Theory

9.2.1 Implications for Theory on Entrepreneurial Action

The *first* essential theoretical contribution of this thesis is that it extends our understanding of entrepreneurship. As mentioned in Chapters One and Two, entrepreneurship has long focused on the psychological traits, behaviour, and opportunity approaches. These are singular views of entrepreneurship and recent critiques question these methodologies as no single approach captures a true and accurate picture of entrepreneurship (Audretsch et al., 2020). Therefore, this study provided a more coherent perspective of entrepreneurship that

includes the context (Audretsch et al., 2020). Contexts included structure (i.e., community) and religion (i.e., Buddhism), and found that ventures emerge through the interaction between these contexts. These findings are consistent with Kitching and Rouse's (2017; 2020) explanation of entrepreneurial action. They argued that conceptualisations of entrepreneurial action require a reference to both agent (e.g., entrepreneur) and context. They proposed entrepreneurial action as "how goods and services come into being through interactions between entrepreneurs and their *structural* and *cultural* contexts" [emphasis added] (Kitching & Rouse, 2017, p. 571).

This contextualised view of entrepreneurship may provide a more nuanced understanding of entrepreneurship because it is essential to understand the emergence of a particular manifestation of entrepreneurship (Audretsch et al., 2020). According to Welter, Baker, and Wirsching (2018), most entrepreneurship research is decontextualised and the contexts that this research examined – that of community and religion contexts – may extend the boundaries of entrepreneurship.

The *Second* contribution to the theory of entrepreneurship is that entrepreneurship involves a series of entrepreneurial actions (Shepherd, 2015). These finding were in consistent with the new venture creation perspective (Davidsson & Gruenhagen, 2020) that revealed that that entrepreneurial action involves pre- and post-launch phases of a venture – that of entrepreneurial intention, resourcing, and community vitality. These findings may assist to establish the underpinnings of the phenomenon of new ventures which Shepherd et al. (2020) consider as the central argument of entrepreneurship.

The *third* contribution to the theory of entrepreneurial action supports the idea that entrepreneurial action requires an examination of entrepreneurial agency (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). Findings suggested entrepreneurial agency as a necessary condition for entrepreneurial action (McMullen et al., 2020). The agents' interaction within the contexts generates causal

powers, potentials, or capacities (Kitching & Rouse, 2020) for entrepreneurial action to occur, but they require agents to activate them (Archer, 1995). Therefore, taking into account the agents' involvement brings an important facet to entrepreneurial action research.

9.2.2 Implication for Theory on Community Dynamics in Entrepreneurship

Regarding the community context, *first*, findings of this research contributed to extend the definition of a community. According to Marquis et al. (2011) geographic communities have been the most agreed form of community in the literature. They recognised the need for research that departs from studies that define communities based on geographic locations, and focus more on a broader perspective of communities, such as virtual and transnational communities. Embracing this notion, findings of this research introduced two types of communities – that of close (i.e., family) and distant (i.e., social) communities based on enduring relationships among actors (Freeman & Audia, 2006). Family (i.e., close community conduit) refers to the group that the entrepreneur is surrounded by and consists of parents, spouse, and children. Social (i.e., distant community conduit) is any member who is outside the immediate family unit such as, other relatives, friends, colleagues, peers, etc.

Second, findings from this study suggest that these two types of communities interact with the pre-launch phases of entrepreneurial action enabling and constraining its action. These enabling and constraining roles provided some novel theoretical implications. As mentioned in the previous chapter, research findings showed implications for family support (instrumental, non-instrumental, and indecisive) and opposition (family member's preference for white-collar careers, and their perception of entrepreneurship as an insecure occupation) on entrepreneurial intention literature. Social support included instrumental and non-instrumental dimensions and constraints included the prevalence of less developed cultures and a negative view of entrepreneurial intentions. The resourcing phase findings showed implications on family

support only in the first stage of resourcing – that of bricolage. Social communities enabled resources showing direct and indirect supports. The constraining roles of social communities included a reluctance to provide finance, pressure for relocation, and lack of encouragement.

Taken collectively, the *essential* research implication regarding community interplay with entrepreneurial actions includes the variation of the interaction of community members during different phases of the ventures. As entrepreneurs move from the intention phase to the resourcing phase, they gradually reduce their interactions with family communities while keeping a consistent interaction with the social community. Thus, as the venture moves from intention to resourcing, the venture becomes more divergent and the entrepreneur may require more formal networks than informal ones (i.e., families), resulting in them moving from families to social communities. This finding supports Clough et al. (2019) suggestion that research is required to address the of types of communities and at which stage an entrepreneur initiates a search for resources.

Clough et al. (2019) argue that research regarding the resources search of an emergent venture has not been conceptualised explicitly: instead, it is implicitly assumed that an entrepreneur's mobilisation of resources is restricted to the close ties (i.e., networks) of the entrepreneur. Findings from this research contributed to solve this puzzle. It was found that when mobilising resources, entrepreneurs expand their networks to social communities (i.e., distant ties) that include community members beyond their close ties. In addition, this research provided two roles – direct and intermediary roles – in enabling resources. The former refers to community members' direct assistance by providing resources. The latter refers to community assistance by forming links with another parties to access resources. These findings collectively suggest that the resource mobilisation of an emergent venture can expand beyond personal networks to formal networks that consist of distant community members. Resource

mobilisation is not necessarily restricted to pre-existing networks. It is not limited to the personal background and neighbourhood in which the entrepreneur grew up, and not only individuals who are born to privileged families can access rich resources.

This study also extends the understanding of community interaction during the post-launch phase – that of community vitality. The extant literature on entrepreneurial impact on communities provides an economic perspective. For example, Korsching (2004) argues that entrepreneurs take actions to strengthen the economy of communities because if the community actively works, entrepreneurs have a chance to operate ventures successfully. The findings of this study provided a novel perspective to the entrepreneurs' impact on communities. Entrepreneurs act to improve community vitality based on altruistic motivations reinforced by their religion: Buddhism. This is an important opportunity for future research.

9.2.3 Implication for Theory on Buddhism in Entrepreneurship

Regarding the religion context of entrepreneurial action, the existing body of knowledge provides evidence that religion manifests in entrepreneurial action, sometimes discouraging it and sometimes encouraging it (Farmaki et al., 2020; Lu & Wu, 2020). Findings of this research provided support for the latter arguing that Buddhism manifests in the entrepreneurial sphere by guiding entrepreneurs to realise their goals. According to the findings, Buddhism assisted to alleviate community tensions imposed during the pre-launch phases of entrepreneurial action. The Buddhist tenets pertinent to the entrepreneurial intention phase include discernment and right livelihood. The quality of being determined was relevant to the resourcing phase. In addition, the post-launch entrepreneurial action – that of community vitality – was reinforced by compassion. These Buddhist tenets collectively supported the conclusion that Buddhism assisted entrepreneurial action.

9.3 Implications for Practice

9.3.1 Implications for Entrepreneurship Educators and Students

The essential implication for entrepreneurship educators includes the need to widen the scope of entrepreneurship courses taught to undergraduate and postgraduate students in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan entrepreneurship curricula are developed around the fundamentals suggested by Shane (2003), and Barringer (2012). Their central arguments for entrepreneurship definition are based on entrepreneurial opportunities. This study contributed to a broader perspective of entrepreneurship, embracing the fact that entrepreneurship involves a series of entrepreneurial actions (Shepherd, 2015). In addition, these entrepreneurial actions favour the "creation of new ventures" (Davidsson et al., 2020). Therefore, widening the scope of entrepreneurship curricula by recognising that entrepreneurship involves a series of actions may enable students to expand their understanding of entrepreneurship.

Second, this research showed the essential role of Buddhism in realising entrepreneurial aspirations. This finding indicates the relevance of Buddhism to entrepreneurship. Recognising entrepreneurship as a multidisciplinary field, curricula can be expanded to incorporate topics such as religion and spirituality.

Third, this research was conducted in a geographic context where community and religion factors were considered unconducive to the actions of entrepreneurs. However, the cases examined during the study showed how entrepreneurs became successful even though their community context produced tension, particularly for habitual and portfolio entrepreneurs. These successful participants can be used as teaching cases to inculcate and strengthen entrepreneurial intentions among students.

9.3.2 Implications for Policy Makers and Financial Institutions

The essential implication for policy makers and financial institutions is the importance of strengthening subsidy mechanisms to enhance a start-up's capacity to establish a venture in an industrial area. Due to resource constraints, start-ups typically begin as home-based businesses and their activities can cause inconvenience to community members. If a suitable business begins in an industrial area, benefits may arise from access to different sources of knowledge (Saxenian, 1990), entrepreneurial friendly environments (Glasmeier, 2006), and environments for idea exchange and creativity (Pouder & StJohn, 1996). Government mechanisms, such as providing subsidies, may help ventures achieve the above-mentioned benefits, and assist communities to function properly.

Government intervention, particularly during the initial phases of ventures, is also equally important to reduce the liabilities of newness that ventures experience (Söderblom, Samuelsson, Wiklund, & Sandberg, 2015). Söderblom et al. (2015) discovered that subsidised start-ups attract more resources in terms of financial and human capital than their non-subsidised counterparts because government intervention signals the legitimacy of the start-up.

9.3.3 Implications for Entrepreneurs

The conceptual framework provided in this study can be a valuable reference tool for entrepreneurs to understand entrepreneurial action within community and religious contexts. It is important for prospective entrepreneurs to understand that venture creation is both enabled and constrained by the surrounding communities. Especially in the Sri Lankan context, families are closely-knit and interdependent. The interdependence has implications for behaviour and actions of the family members. For example, in a family where entrepreneurship is considered legitimate, those with entrepreneurial intentions may be encouraged. However, this research found that in realising entrepreneurial intentions one should not totally rely on the community

perception of entrepreneurship. The research supported the importance of believing only what is true in the light of one's awareness to realise entrepreneurial intentions.

In addition, this research provided implications regarding the importance of mobilising resources through community members. Mostly, entrepreneurs face resource constraints owing to the liability of the newness of the firm (Gimenez-Fernandez et al., 2020) and community members can be regarded as an excellent source to mobilise resources. Developing a resource base for the venture is important because it is regarded as the foundation for firm existence and subsequent growth (George, 2005). Finally, regarding the Buddhism context, this research provided insights for prospective entrepreneurs to realise that Buddhism assists them to attain their venturing aspirations. There are a number of Buddhist tenets that govern entrepreneurial action such as discernment, right livelihood, determination, and compassion.

9.4 Research Limitations

A major limitation of this study was an issue with data collection. This research was conducted from November 2017 to January 2021. The first round of data collection was conducted in Sri Lanka from January to June 2019. The second-round data collection (follow-up interviews) was to be conducted in New Zealand during March - May 2020. The researcher was not able to visit Sri Lanka for the second-round data collection due to border restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher took actions to mitigate this limitation by conducting the follow-up interviews over the telephone.

9.5 Future Research

This research suggests a number of future research directions. *First*, findings from this study have contributed to the notion that entrepreneurship involves a series of actions (Shepherd, 2015). According to the findings, entrepreneurial action involves entrepreneurial

intention, resourcing, and community vitality. Viewing entrepreneurship as series of actions seems to be a cogent conceptualisation for entrepreneurship because singular views of entrepreneurship have failed to capture the true meaning of entrepreneurship (Audretsch et al., 2020). Hence, perceiving entrepreneurship as a series of actions warrants more research attention to untangle the puzzle of what entrepreneurship really means.

Second, this research has also contributed to the need to contextualise entrepreneurship research (Audretsch et al., 2020; Welter et al., 2018). Contextualising entrepreneurship into community and religion contexts (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020) this study found that the actions of the entrepreneurs are interacted within the context. Understanding entrepreneurship in natural contexts is essential because "the phenomenon of entrepreneurship cannot be explained either by environmental forces or by individual factors in the absence of the other" (Shane, 2003, p. 33). These insights call for more entrepreneurship research in different contexts.

The *third* future research direction is pertinent to the community context of entrepreneurial action. It was found that there is a variation in the interaction of community members during different phases of ventures. As entrepreneurs move from the intention phase to the resourcing phase, they gradually reduce their interactions with family communities while keeping a consistent interaction with the social community throughout the venture creation process. This highlights that as the venture moves from intention to resourcing, the ventures become more divergent, and entrepreneurs may require more formal networks than informal ones (i.e., families), leading them to move from family to social communities. Future research regarding the variation of the interaction of community members during different phases of ventures is warranted. As Clough et al. (2019) states, knowledge regarding the resources search of an emergent venture is far from complete.

The *fourth* future research direction is pertinent to the religion context of entrepreneurial action. In this regard, Pavlovich and Markman (in press) argued that research into entrepreneurship and spirituality has been avoided, possibly because it challenges the rationality of science. But when it is excluded, our research becomes partial and incomplete. This research responded to this critique, and provided valuable insights. It identified Buddhist tenets such as discernment, right livelihood, determination, and the important role of compassion that assists entrepreneurs to realise their goals. However, more research is needed in the religion context of entrepreneurship. The association between religion and entrepreneurship can be further refined by involving Buddhist entrepreneurs from other Buddhist lineages. Also, this association can be broadened further incorporating the comparative aspect involving entrepreneurs from other religious viewpoints such as Christianity, Islam, Hindu, etc.

The *final* future research direction involves the philosophical dimension. This research used a critical realist inspired framework (Kitching & Rouse, 2017; 2020). It was an appropriate framework to investigate the contextual phenomenon (Blundel, 2007). Given the importance of contextualising entrepreneurship research (Audretsch et al., 2020) future research could investigate entrepreneurship from a critical realist stance as it provides more nuanced understanding of the context of entrepreneurship.

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Appendices

11.1 Appendix A: Cover Letter for Interviews

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Cover letter for interviews

Srinath Dissanayake
School of Marketing and Management,
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton
New Zealand.

Dear Madam/Sir

Request to participate in an interview on "Entrepreneurial Action: Community and Buddhism Contexts in Sri Lanka"

I am a lecturer attached to the Department of Commerce and Financial Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, and presently pursuing a doctoral study at the School of Marketing and Management, The University of Waikato, New Zealand. The study intends to examine how ventures emerge through interacting with the immediate surroundings that include community and Buddhism. I am inviting you to participate in this study, which would be in terms of interviews.

Your participation would be highly valued and would make a valuable contribution to my study on entrepreneurship. I assure you that all information collected will be strictly confidential and be used solely for my Ph.D. studies. Real names of the participants will NOT be used in any subsequent reports or publications and all data will be analysed in a collective manner; any quotations will be anonymous. Please see the attached 'participant information sheet' and 'consent form' for more details.

If you are happy to participate, please send me an email so that I can contact you to set up a mutually convenient time for the interview. I am hoping to receive a positive response in this relation.

Yours sincerely,
Srinath Dissanayake
Email: nswd1@students.waikato.ac.nz
Cell-phone: +64 7 362 3513 (International): 0771958963 (Local)

11.2 Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Project Title

Entrepreneurial Action: Community and Buddhism Contexts in Sri Lanka.

Purpose

This research will build a coherent explanation regarding how both the community and Buddhism shapes entrepreneurial action in Sri Lanka. This research relies on collecting data as a part of the Ph.D. process, undertaken at the School of Management and Marketing, University of Waikato, New Zealand. Mainly,

What will you have to do and what rights do you have?

Please read and understand the "Participant Information Sheet" and the "Consent Form for Participants" attached If you willing to participate in the interview contact me within one week time to arrange an interview date at your convenience. We will be signing the consent sheets at the date of interview. Any questions can be clarified by contacting the following people.

The interview will be conducted between you and the researcher. The interviews will be conducted in Sinhalese. The duration of the interview will be 45-60 minutes. I will be asking questions and you have to tell a story as to what you have experienced. The three questions relate to your business development , your community and your religion and how they impact on entrepreneurial initiatives. The interviewer will be taking notes during the interview, and the discussion will be audio recorded. Within each main questions, the researcher may ask some probing questions in relation to the discussion. You may ask not to answer any questions during the interview, and you can terminate the interview at any point if you wish. Further, you have the right to withdraw the interview data within 3 weeks of the interview.

What will happen to the information collected?

Collected data (voice and written) will be ONLY available to the researcher and his three academic supervisors. Copies of the data will be kept securely by the researcher. The data will be fed into the computer system for analysis, but the anonymity of all data will remain total. Real names of participants will not be used in research reports or publications (Journal papers,

conference proceedings, and the thesis). The researcher will make use of some interview data in quotations within his thesis, but never in a way that might allow the source of the quotation to be identified. All collected data will be destroyed after six months of thesis submission. The outcome of the research will be distributed to each participant after 18 months of data collection.

Declaration to participants

Hereby I declare the interview data is used ONLY for academic purpose and the data will be held confidentially while ensuring the participant's anonymity.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, either now or in the future, please contact either:

The researcher
Srinath Dissanayake
School of Management and Marketing,
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton
New Zealand.
Email: nswd1@students.waikato.ac.nz
Cell-phone: +64 7 362 3513 (International): 0771958963 (Local)

The Supervisor
Professor Kathryn Pavlovich.
School of Management and Marketing,
University of Waikato,
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton
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11.3 Appendix C: Consent form for Participants

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Entrepreneurial Action: Community and Buddhism Contexts in Sri Lanka.

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Information Sheet for Participants** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. Further, I have the right to withdraw the data provided by me within 3 months of the interview. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Information Sheet**.

☐ I agree for this interview to be audio recorded

☐ I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Information Sheet** form.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:
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